

# Performing as Mapping

An examination of the role of site-specific performance practice as a methodology to map and/or reimagine sites of urban regeneration.

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PhD Architecture, December 2014  
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## **Abstract**

This thesis is a practice-led enquiry that examines the role of site-specific performance as a methodology or set of tools to 'map' sites of urban regeneration, and thus seeks to build further links between performance and the spatial practices of architecture and urbanism.

Performativity has emerged as an important critical concept across a range of social and spatial fields - as a way understanding of how personal and place identities are continuously (re)created through everyday performance. Meanwhile, practitioners and researchers have become increasingly interested in creating, documenting, and theorising models of theatre and performance that engage with sites and communities outside of the gallery or auditorium.

The thesis traces the emergence of 'site-specific' performances as 'more-than-representational' cartographies - from the early experiments of the Situationist International and the 'Happenings', through everyday practices of walking and navigating cities, to emerging technological and 'locative' performance models. The definition of what constitutes (a) 'site' is tested by locating these practices within the broader participatory and relational 'turns' in contemporary art. While this 'expansion' has opened up opportunities for site-specific performance-makers to operate within spheres such as community engagement, wider concerns are raised by the rhetoric of 'community empowerment' and the instrumentalisation of creative practice by political and commissioning institutions.

Keeping these issues in mind, this research builds upon Jane Rendell's call for the field of architecture and urbanism to embrace methods from public art and performance in order to operate as 'critical spatial practices'. The thesis constructs an argument for the role of site-specific performance in articulating contested histories, claims, and potentials of the site. This proposition is explored through three case studies, including empirical and practice-based research with performance makers in complex and contested sites in northern England. This is supported by a survey of contemporary performance practices that directly address themes and sites of urban regeneration.

Using the twin lenses of mapping and participation, the thesis demonstrates how performance(s) can articulate the multiplicity of stories, experiences, and potentials in marginalised or 'interstitial' urban sites. By introducing other agencies and temporalities to the site ('gathering and showing'), site-specific practices have been shown to challenge dominant narratives and unsettle the stable or singular representations of places perpetuated by professional frameworks of urban development and regeneration.



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## Preface

This research project is a product of a number of specific circumstances. Spanning the years between 2010 and 2014, this period encompassed some of the worst years for the commercial architectural practice in the post-war period. As a profession bound to the commercial demands of development, architecture is particularly vulnerable to the propensity of the market to fluctuate in economic cycles. The global economic crisis that began in 2007 has had a severe impact on the construction industry and therefore on architectural practice, particularly in the context of Western industrialised economies. During the trough of the recession (2008-2013), some 38% of architects were reported to have lost their job, with worse figures still for non-professionally qualified architecture graduates.<sup>1</sup> After training for seven or more years to complete their professional qualifications, many architects faced the choice of retraining, relocating abroad, or simply sitting and waiting it out for the so-called 'good times' to return to the UK construction sector.

By taking a longer-term view it is clear that cycles of growth and recession are a recurring feature of the UK economy throughout the industrialised era. The impact of previous cycles on the construction sector and built environment professions is similarly well-documented, and more experienced practitioners may be justified in suggesting that they have 'seen it all before'. Nonetheless, for many the recession prompted a crisis of confidence that was still not truly resolved by the time the housing market and wider economy showed signs of recovery in early 2014. The 2007 crash led many in the profession to reevaluate the fundamental logic of commercial architectural practice. In order to keep balance sheets in the black, a significant number of practices turned to international design work in the Middle-East or emerging 'BRIC' economies. An increase in projects in China or Abu Dhabi may have helped to keep a significant number of British (and European-based) architects in work, but a workload dominated by international projects and competitions raises a number of other concerns for professional practitioners. This includes the intense pressures of the competitive bidding that is often required to win international design work. Remote or long-distance working methods can also sever the connection between members of the design team or the designer and client. This leaves architects often facing a situation where they are reliant on second or third-hand briefing material. The relationship between designer and the site of the project becomes one mediated by third-party data or, as a last resort, Google Earth. Anecdotally,

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<sup>1</sup> Andrea Klettner, 'Employment Survey: Is Architecture Working?', *Building Design* <<http://www.bdonline.co.uk/news/analysis/employment-survey-is-architecture-working?/5051394.article>> [accessed 24 March 2014].

some of these shifts within the profession have led some practitioners to question their motivations for practicing architecture. My personal decision to leave commercial practice in 2010 was also linked to this sense of detachment, and a desire to develop projects in local sites and in collaboration with local communities was a key motivation behind this research.

The local context of Sheffield has been a significant influence on this research as both the site of my architectural education and the site of one of the three research case studies. The radical approaches to design, research, and pedagogical methods at the Sheffield School of Architecture (SSoA) have played an important role, instilling strong critical and ethical values to my approach as both a designer and researcher. As the 'most socially engaged School of Architecture in the UK', SSoA is active in voicing its position on architectural education.<sup>2</sup> Students are taught to understand architecture as operating at a range of scales (from peri-regional scale to the human scale) and are encouraged to develop a critical and social agenda to design. An important aspect of the approach to both pedagogy and research at SSoA is collaboration or researching *with* practitioners beyond the field of architecture and communities outside of the University institution.<sup>3</sup> From a personal perspective, the values instilled during my architectural education at SSoA shaped my future attitude to architectural and urbanist practice, and my work (on both a professional and voluntary basis) with organisations that enabled communities to participate in processes of urban planning and design.<sup>4</sup> This work places a lot of importance the ability to communicate and collaborate with a wide range of people, requiring language and modes of representation that are not only accessible but deliberately designed to open up the closed silos of disciplinary knowledge. Working with community artists and other creative practitioners, I became increasingly aware that the methods these practitioners use to engage with local marginalised sites were relevant to the type of architectural practice I hoped to develop.

The opportunity to return to academic research and to further explore the boundaries of architectural practice was offered by the RECITE research programme funded by the University of Sheffield.<sup>5</sup> The key strength of this research group was its multi-disciplinarity – as it brought together researchers and practitioners from architecture, performance studies, and computer science. Researching across these three disciplines required additional work in terms of becoming

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<sup>2</sup> The University of Sheffield, 'Sheffield School of Architecture' <<http://sheffield.ac.uk/architecture>> [accessed 11 December 2013].

<sup>3</sup> One prominent example of SSoA work with local communities is the 'Live Projects' carried out by Masters students <<http://www.liveprojects.org>> [accessed 11/12/13]

<sup>4</sup> Distinctive Sharrow Action Group <<http://sharrowaction.blogspot.co.uk/>> [accessed 24/03/14] and Integreat Plus <<http://www.integreatplus.com>> [accessed 24/03/14]

<sup>5</sup> The University of Sheffield, 'Rethinking a City's Theatres, Digital Creativity and Innovation' <<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/recite>> [accessed 17 February 2014].



familiarised with two unfamiliar fields, including new authors, concepts, terminologies, and methods. During the course of the research, this has resulted in a certain level of disciplinary ‘anxiety’, a term that has been used to describe the discomfort of leaving the relative safety of one’s own academic discipline or profession.<sup>6</sup> In the course of my postgraduate study, I have identified a gradual shift from outside in, reflected in a partial assimilation into the field of performance studies. This is illustrated by the conferences and workshops attended and papers presented.<sup>7</sup> The ability to explore other disciplines and fields can also be viewed as part of the learning process of undertaking doctoral-level research - a long-term process during which one has opportunities to develop a range of skills alongside (and in addition to) formal training in research methods. While the overall strength of the RECITE network may have waned as individual projects progressed and became more focused, I believe that the impact on the research culture has been positive, with new links opened up between academic departments (and therefore research disciplines) that have been mutually beneficial. At the same time, the ‘novelty value’ of playing the role of ‘an architect stepping into the field of performance studies’, has, in retrospect, been beneficial in negotiating access with performance-makers for the case study research. This has been part of a shift in positioning from ‘research on’ performance to ‘research with’, which has seen myself as researcher undertake different positions across the three different case studies – first as outside observer and latterly as activator or collaborator. The drive to activate projects and ‘make things happen’ as a ‘practice-led’ researcher is also something that has been instilled by my architectural education and training as an architect and designer. However, the shift from observer to (co)practitioner brings further anxieties, particularly in terms of co-creating a project that is judged as a public event at the same time as being judged as piece of rigorous academic research.<sup>8</sup> Despite these concerns, this thesis begins by framing anxiety a positive quality and as a guard against complacency. In the context of this thesis, the challenge is to keep looking outside and beyond the comfort offered by remaining ‘within’ - in the grey areas between the disciplinary comfort zones, in communities outside of academic institutions, in urban sites beyond the traditional theatre or auditorium, and in the ways of working beyond the binary of practice *or* research.

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<sup>6</sup> George Dodds, ‘Performance Anxiety’, *Journal of Architectural Education*, 61 (2008), 3–3  
<<http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1531-314X.2008.00180.x>>.

<sup>7</sup> The Theatre & Performance Research Association Conference, Kingston-upon-Thames (2011). The Art of Research Conference, Helsinki (2012). The International Federation of Theatre Research Conference, Barcelona (2013).

<sup>8</sup> See Chapter 9 case study, ‘The Port of Sheffield’ audio-walk.



## 1 Introduction: Architecture and performance

Building upon critical perspectives on site-specific performance and an expanded concept of 'dramaturgy', this thesis offers a critical appraisal of the role that 'site-specific' performances might play as a *design and research methodology* within the field of architecture.

Architecture is understood in broad terms – as a range of spatial design practices and as a multi-disciplinary field of research. The idea that architecture is more than just the design of buildings has been driven by academic institutions (schools of architecture and the built environment) and professional practices, both of which have expanded the traditional confines of the discipline through specialisation and experimental modes of practice. This diversification is perhaps most visible within the field of urbanism (and its alternative guise as urban design), which offers interdisciplinary and design-led approaches at neighbourhood, city and regional scales. Research and creative practice in urbanism has developed out of the increasingly complexity of cities, as well as growing concerns around social and environmental sustainability, the economics of urban development, and the impact of planning and regeneration. As well as architects, planners, landscape architects and other technical experts, the expanding practice of urbanism acknowledges the important role played by policy-makers, developers, private investors and local communities involved in decision making processes and spatial transformations.

Performance studies is a similarly interdisciplinary field, and has expanded from its roots in theatre and the performing arts to include the study of many different forms of 'performance'. These include auditorium-based theatre, outdoor and 'site-specific' events, live art, participatory or relational art practices, festivals and rituals, the presentation of personal identities, as well as the performative and social dimensions of architecture and the city.<sup>1</sup> As well as offering methodological and theoretical approaches for the study and interpretation of contemporary site-specific practice, the thesis examines the potential for dramaturgy, performance, and 'performativity' to inform our understanding of the complex processes of designing, mapping and planning the city.

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<sup>1</sup> Karen Chapple and Shannon Jackson, 'Commentary: Arts, Neighborhoods, and Social Practices: Towards an Integrated Epistemology of Community Arts', *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 29 (2010), 478–90; Shannon Jackson, *Social Works: Performing Art, Supporting Publics* (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2011); Jon McKenzie, *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance* (New York: Routledge, 2001); Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, 3rd edition (London ; New York: Routledge, 2013).

The research process began by building upon recent 'conversations' and mutual concerns that have emerged between and across these two fields:

- Architecture and performance are multidisciplinary fields incorporating a variety of distinct epistemological and methodological positions.
- Architecture and performance combine practice (making, designing, and 'performing') with research (theorising, reflecting upon, and improving practices).
- Architecture and performance typically employ representational codes to translate abstract ideas and concepts into formal arrangements of people in space (and time).
- Architecture and performance face a similar set of emergent issues around agency, participation, democracy, and a challenge to the traditionally formal relationship between expert/ creative producer and passive audience/ user.
- Architecture and performance increasingly share similar aims and methods around the notion of 'mapping' contested urban spaces.

Before addressing these complex and multi-layered issues in further detail, the thesis opens with an overview of some of the key theoretical and practice-based intersections between these two expansive fields.

## 1.0 Performance architecture

The term performance is perhaps most commonly found in architectural research and practice as a technological or engineering concept, often referring to a building's thermal or structural 'performance'. More recently, the term has been embraced within the field of digital and interactive design, with the emergence of the term 'performative architecture' gaining wider use as a way of describing building design driven by parameters of technical, economic, or social performance.<sup>2</sup> Within professional design practice, this shift is linked to an increasing use of digital tools, modelling software, and simulation processes. While these tools offer new possibilities to the designer, they can also be potentially reductive, and are often limited by the availability of spatial data. Within the fields of urbanism and urban planning, spatial analysis has also tended to rely on the acquisition and analysis of data using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) – the implications of which are explored further in chapter 3.

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<sup>2</sup> *Performative Architecture: Beyond Instrumentality*, ed. by Branko Kolarevic and Ali Malkawi (Routledge, 2005); Chris Salter and Peter Sellars, 'Performative Architectures', in *Entangled: Technology and the Transformation of performance* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2010); Michael Hensel, *Performance-Oriented Architecture* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2013).

Looking beyond these technical definitions towards discourse in the architectural humanities, the term reappears as a way of describing the way in which space is inhabited, appropriated, or 'performed'. This usage can be traced back to the 'performative turn', which introduced performance as a way of understanding human behaviour across a number of disciplines. In recent architectural theory, a preoccupation with performing space is apparent in much of Bernard Tschumi's writing on temporality and narrative, and his assertion that there can be no architecture without event.<sup>3</sup> Iain Borden has described how the 'performance' of a person within architectural space, such as the bodily act of walking up a set of stairs, transforms that space into a staircase.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, Neil Leach argues that it is the daily 'performances' that allows one's body to 'grow into' and 'become part of' one's immediate environment, while through the same process one's environment plays a fundamental role in shaping personal identity.<sup>5</sup> The notion that architectural spaces might 'perform' a role in everyday life in buildings and cities has been further developed by a number of authors in the recent collection 'Architecture as a Performing Art'.<sup>6</sup>

Prior to the expansion of the performance theory in the 1970s, the field of performance studies was primarily associated with theatre and the performing arts. The way that these forms of performance are understood within architectural practice is largely in terms of the design of purpose-built auditoria, stages, or scenographic elements. The practice and theory of theatre design is a highly specialised field in itself. This is demonstrated in the work of authors such as Iain Mackintosh and Chris van Uffelen, whose research on theatre design combines architectural history, spatial proxemics, environmental psychology, and performance research.<sup>7</sup> However, in contrast to the progressive advances in performance studies and live art, the history and theory of theatre architecture has remained relatively locked within the notion of a traditional theatre building. From my own experience of carrying out this research, countless conversations with architectural researchers and practitioners have unearthed a common assumption that any investigation of performance in the context of architecture must be somehow linked to the design of a physical space for theatrical performance.

Another confluence of performance, architecture and urban regeneration can also be identified in the many examples across the US and Europe of new performance venues or cultural centres as a

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<sup>3</sup> Bernard Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction* (London: MIT Press, 1994), p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Iain Borden, 'Stairway Architecture: Transformative Cycles in the Golden Lane', in *Architecture: The Subject Is Matter* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 119–30.

<sup>5</sup> Neil Leach, *Camouflage* (Cambridge, Mass; London: MIT, 2006), p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> Marcia F Feuerstein and Gray Read, *Architecture as a Performing Art* (Farnham; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2013).

<sup>7</sup> Iain Mackintosh, *Architecture, Actor, and Audience* (London: Routledge, 1993); Chris van Uffelen, *Performance Architecture + Design, Masterpieces* (Salenstein: Braun, 2010).

means of regenerating a town or city.<sup>8</sup> Recent notable projects include the Lincoln Center in New York (led by Diller Scofidio + Renfro), Sage Gateshead (Foster and Partners), or the proposed Maria Abramovic Institute (Rem Koolhaas/ OMA).<sup>9</sup> These have been accompanied by positive rhetoric around the impact of new cultural venues and the benefits for the immediate neighbourhood and the wider city. Much of this discourse can be linked back to the work of authors such as Richard Florida in the US and Charles Landry in the UK, who have played a prominent role in promoting the wide-ranging socio-economic benefits of the arts. They argue that the provision of spaces for cultural production and consumption helps cities to attract the so-called 'creative classes' and to kick-start the process of urban gentrification.<sup>10</sup> Much of this thinking has subsequently been adopted into national and local policies on urban planning and regeneration.<sup>11</sup>

Since the latter part of the twentieth century many of the long-held notions of what (a) theatre 'is' have been dismantled, with a breaking down of traditional roles of performer and audience, and much greater emphasis on interpretation, immersion, or emotional response rather than performance as having one single meaning. These trends, which might be thought of as being broadly characteristic of the post-modern era, have emerged alongside new forms which have intentionally sought to blur the boundaries between performance and 'real life'. Experiments in the 1960s and 1970s by figures such as Alan Kaprow, Armand Gatti, and Richard Schechner (often referred to as the founding father of performance studies) took place within 'found' spaces using everyday performative actions. These experimental performances, which emphasised the idea that site and its left-over traces had their own language, have been hugely influential in the development of contemporary 'site-specific' performance practices.<sup>12</sup> Building upon some of these ideas, Peter Brook famously declared in 1984 that - "*I can take an empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged*".<sup>13</sup> Marvin Carlson recently suggested that the limits of contemporary performance have been further completely eroded to the point where Brook's statement requires further expansion. Carlson argues that *we* can now take any *place* - empty or occupied, physical or virtual, lived or imagined, and call it a stage. He goes on to suggest that the

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<sup>8</sup> Elizabeth Strom, 'Let's Put On a Show! Performing Arts and Urban Revitalization in Newark, New Jersey', *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 21 (1999), 423–35.

<sup>9</sup> Marina Abramovic Institute <<http://www.immaterial.org/>> [accessed 2 August 2014].

<sup>10</sup> Richard L. Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class : And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life* (New York: BasicBooks, 2002).

<sup>11</sup> Loretta Lees and Clare Melhuish, 'Arts-Led Regeneration in the UK: The Rhetoric and the Evidence on Urban Social Inclusion', *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 2013, p. 5  
<<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0969776412467474>>.

<sup>12</sup> Marvin Carlson, 'The Iconic Stage', *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism*, 3 (1989), 3–18 (pp. 14–15).

<sup>13</sup> Peter Brook, *The Empty Space* (London: Penguin, 1990), p. 11.

only boundaries of performance are our imagination and ‘interpolation’ - the semantic argument that relies on your authority to re-define something and the willingness of an audience – whoever or wherever they may be - to ‘go along with it’.<sup>14</sup>

### 1.0.1 The performative turn

In literature that discusses the influence of art and performance practice within spatial disciplines (such as critical cartography, geography, architecture and planning), a number of terms are used that require further attention. One in particular is ‘performative’, which relates to the ‘performative turn’ across the social sciences - with its roots in Austin’s speech act theory, Goffman’s dramaturgical sociology, and developed through Judith Butler’s concept of performative gender. Butler argued that (gender) identities are not predetermined but constantly (re)produced or ‘performed’ through the presentation of self in everyday social interactions - a process that is shaped by both societal expectations and bodily practices.<sup>15</sup> Butler’s work has been hugely influential in developing an understanding of the way that individuals ‘perform’ identities in everyday social life. In architecture, Jan Smitheran suggests that performativity might be used to describe the way in which regulatory codes, gender norms, and modes of representation become ‘naturalised’ within practice, and thus how the accepted traditions of architectural practice are ‘performatively’ reiterated.<sup>16</sup> This use of performativity could be equally applied to a range of other professional disciplines and practices. Performance theorists such as Harvie have adopted this concept to suggest that identities of place can also be created (and indeed are continuously recreated) through the way that citizens act (or perform).<sup>17</sup> The notion of performativity has also been used to develop post-structuralist theories of space in geography and critical cartography. These concepts are discussed further in chapter 3.

These examples demonstrate the way in which concepts and terms from performance studies have been used to build theory across a range of contexts and other disciplines. Carlson’s description of performance as ‘an essentially contested concept’ highlights how the term has come to represent multiple (and disputed) meanings, discourses, and traditions.<sup>18</sup> To deal with the widening use of ‘performance’ following the performative turn, Schechner has theorised performance as a spectrum

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<sup>14</sup> Marvin Carlson, ‘What Is a Theatre?’ (presented at the Architecture Section, Prague Quadrennial of Performance Space and Design, 2011).

<sup>15</sup> Judith Butler, ‘Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory’, *Theatre Journal*, 40 (1988), 519–31 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3207893>>.

<sup>16</sup> Jan Smitheran, ‘Spatial Performativity/Spatial Performance’, *Architectural Theory Review*, 16 (2011), 55–69 (p. 65).

<sup>17</sup> J. Harvie and T. Etchells, *Theatre & the City* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 47.

<sup>18</sup> Marvin Carlson, *Performance: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

of expression - from ritual behaviours to sports and popular forms of entertainment.<sup>19</sup> Schechner draws a distinction between 'as-performance' (everyday practices) and 'is-performance' (a framed theatrical event), although these two positions are regarded more as ends of a spectrum rather than binary opposites. This duality is explored in further detail in chapter 2.

In her review of the use of these concepts in recent architectural literature, Jan Smitheran criticises the conflation of performativity (as related to Butler's construction of gender) with 'performance' as a technical or theatrical concept.<sup>20</sup> The resulting confusion of this double use is brought into focus by the significant number of writings on space and the city that employ the term uncritically to mean 'related to performing', 'performance-like', or 'performance-driven'. Recent examples include 'performative mapping', 'performative architectures' or 'performative technology'.<sup>21</sup> While performativity offers an important way of theorising/ understanding individual agency and the construction of subject, the potential for misunderstanding with this is clear, particularly in the context of interdisciplinary research. For the purposes of this thesis, this second use of performative (as 'related to performing and performance practice') is therefore avoided, with the alternative term 'performance-like' employed where necessary.

### 1.0.2 Looking elsewhere

The use of contemporary performance theory and practice to inform and enrich the field of architecture (and vice versa) has gained increasing interest from both sides of the disciplinary divide. This is demonstrated by some of the recent events that have brought together performance and architecture as a way of exploring questions of 'site' and 'event'. These include the 2011 Prague Quadrennial of Performance Space and Design (where the Architecture Section focused on the question 'What is a theatre now?'), the 2011 'Rise of Performance Architecture' conference in Brussels, and the 2013 'Performance Architecture' event at the TATE gallery. The architect, writer, and MOMA New York curator writer Pedro Gadanho has been particularly influential in shaping the

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<sup>19</sup> Stephen J. Bottoms, 'The Efficacy/Effeminacy Braid: Unpacking the Performance Studies/Theatre Studies Dichotomy', *Theatre Topics*, 13 (2003), 173–87 (p. 175).

<sup>20</sup> Smitheran, p. 57.

<sup>21</sup> C. Perkins, 'Performative and Embodied Mapping', in *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, Oxford: Elsevier, ed. by R. Kitchin and N. Thrift, 2009, pp. 126–32; Kolarevic and Malkawi; Christian Nold, *Emotional Cartography: Technologies of the Self* (Published online, 2009) <<http://emotionalcartography.net/>> [accessed 3 April 2013]; P. Gemeinboeck and R. Saunders, 'Urban Fictions: A Critical Reflection on Locative Art and Performative Geographies', *Digital Creativity*, 22 (2011), 160–73; J. Meejin Yoon, 'Public Works: Projects at Play', *Journal of Architectural Education*, 61 (2008), 59–68 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1531-314X.2008.00188.x>>.



interdisciplinary field of ‘performance architecture’, a term that draws together creative practices that span live art, performance, architecture, and urbanism.<sup>22</sup>

The emergent, interdisciplinary and practice-led nature of performance architecture means that Gadanho’s term can equally be applied to a wide range of projects and interventions that encourage playful interaction with the built environment.<sup>23</sup> Example practices range from large-scale outdoor performances, interactive or playful architectural interventions, live art practices, temporary installations in public spaces, community-based practices, as well the scenographic/ spatial design of performance events. Key reference points in this emerging conversation include the building cuts of architecturally-trained artist Gordon Matta-Clark, Diller Scofidio and Renfro’s Blur Building, D-Tower by NOX (tower that responds to ‘emotional feedback’ by changing colour), and artist Christo’s wrapped projects.

Much like Schechner’s performance spectrum, the practice of ‘performance architecture’ might be considered as a continuum, with physical intervention (or the design of that intervention) at one end and live performance (or the interpretation of that performance) at the other. However, as these examples represent a diverse range of methods, audiences, and artistic or critical intentions, it is perhaps awkward to attempt to group them together under the umbrella of ‘performance architecture’. As is probably becoming clear, the boundaries and terminologies of the field are still very much in flux.

### 1.1 A different way of doing architecture

Alongside these cross-disciplinary experiments and incursions into the field of performance studies, a range of practitioners within the field of architecture and urbanism have begun to explore a different type of ‘performance architecture’ – challenging existing design and construction methods, economies, timescales, and modes of representation. In doing so, practitioners have often used the ‘spatial intelligence’ of architecture to work with marginalised communities - those who do not possess large amounts of social, political or financial capital.<sup>24</sup> The approach adopted in this way of working suggests the possibility of architectural practice that is more participatory, processual,

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<sup>22</sup> Pedro Gadanho, ‘The Performative Turn’, *shrapnel contemporary*, 2012

<<http://shrapnelcontemporary.wordpress.com/2012/02/24/the-performative-turn/>> [accessed 5 September 2013]; Pedro Gadanho, ‘Architecture as Performance (Originally Published in Dédalo #02, Porto, March 07)’, *shrapnel contemporary*, 2007 <<http://shrapnelcontemporary.wordpress.com/archive-texts/architecture-as-performance/>> [accessed 20 February 2013].

<sup>23</sup> Agnieszka Gratza, ‘Open House’, *Frieze*, September 2013.

<sup>24</sup> Nishat Awan, Tatjana Schneider and Jeremy Till, *Spatial Agency : Other Ways of Doing Architecture* (Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2011), pp. 26–27.

dynamic and responsive to social structures and human needs.<sup>25</sup> In recent years, these alternative forms have begun to attract greater critical attention. This is marked by documentation in recent publications such as 'Spatial agency: other ways of doing architecture', 'URBAN ACT: A handbook for alternative practices', TRANS-LOCAL-ACT: Cultural Practices Within and Across, and 'Expanding architecture: design as activism'.<sup>26</sup> These practices or 'spatial agencies' radically challenge and expand the discipline of architecture by engaging with wider socio-spatial networks and by empowering others (non-professionals) to participate in the process of design and production of space.<sup>27</sup> The accompanying critical discourse has (re)introduced concepts such as agency (Anthony Giddens), power relations (Pierre Bourdieu) and actor-network-theory (Bruno Latour) to describe the social expansion of the field of architecture.<sup>28</sup> Theoretical contributions to this field of practice have been made by practitioner/ researcher Doina Petrescu, who has proposed 'acting otherwise' as a method for engaging with the politics of the place (as both designers and residents), 'questioning the rules and regulations of current architectural and urban practice' - introducing participatory approaches, and promoting ways of working which are not 'service-led' or 'client-oriented'.<sup>29</sup> Prue Chiles has proposed a participatory architectural design process driven by the central idea of narrative, a shared process involving long-term engagement, listening, storytelling, mapping, and proposing new urban narratives for a neighbourhood.<sup>30</sup> Similarly, Mieke Schalk reframes the role of the architect or urbanist as 'urban curator' - a gatherer of urban knowledge that remains unheard or overlooked.<sup>31</sup> Raoul Bunschoten, founder of the practice Chora, has applied the same term to describe their approach to urbanism. Rather than starting with the object or building, Chora's role as 'urban curator' is one that approaches projects through the design of 'processes, interactions and organisational structures'.<sup>32</sup> This way of working enables the architect or urbanist to engage with a wide variety of people in order to create the urban strategies needed to address the dynamic nature of complex sites.<sup>33</sup> This notion of applying architectural and spatial design skills to the design of

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<sup>25</sup> Title borrowed from Awan, Schneider and Till.

<sup>26</sup> Awan, Schneider and Till; *URBAN ACT: A Handbook for Alternative Practices*, ed. by atelier d'architecture autogérée (aaa) and PEPRAV (Paris: atelier d'architecture autogérée (aaa), 2007); atelier d'architecture autogérée (aaa) and PEPRAV; Bryan Bell and Katie Wakeford, *Expanding Architecture: Design as Activism* (New York: Metropolis Books, 2008).

<sup>27</sup> Awan, Schneider and Till, p. 29.

<sup>28</sup> Awan, Schneider and Till, p. 30; *Agency: Working with Uncertain Architectures*, ed. by Florian Kossak and others (London ; New York: Routledge, 2010).

<sup>29</sup> Doina Petrescu, 'Relationscapes: Mapping Agencies of Relational Practice in Architecture', *City, Culture and Society*, 3 (2012), 135–40 (p. 136).

<sup>30</sup> Prue Chiles, 'What If?... A Narrative Process for Reimagining the City', in *Architecture and participation*, ed. by Peter Blundell-Jones, Doina Petrescu, and Jeremy Till (London: Spon Press, 2005).

<sup>31</sup> Mieke Schalk, 'Urban Curating: A Critical Practice towards Greater Connectedness', in *Altering practices : feminist politics and poetics of space*, ed. by Doina Petrescu (London: Routledge, 2007); Chiles.

<sup>32</sup> Awan, Schneider and Till, p. 119.

<sup>33</sup> Awan, Schneider and Till, pp. 118–119.

public engagement tools (as mapping devices) is particularly significant to the arguments developed by this thesis. Also highly pertinent is the challenge put forward by Jane Rendell, who has called for architects to look beyond the boundaries of the profession and its inherent concerns with the market economy. In proposing the need for architecture to develop other 'critical spatial practices', Rendell looks in particular towards the practices of public art and performance for alternative tools and methods.<sup>34</sup> The London-based collective MUF are highlighted as a spatial practice whose work successfully crosses over between art and architecture, although the use of public performance and play as part of an 'architectural' toolkit recurs in other examples of practice referenced across this thesis (including Jeanne van Heeswijk, public works, and Raumlabor).<sup>35</sup> Rendell suggests that the relational approach to 'architectural' projects demonstrated by MUF and similar practices represents an important critique of the mainstream architectural design process. In using performance methods and forms of creative/ spatial intervention as a 'methodology', their work focuses on process and the social and spatial relations created during a project, rather than the intervention as an end-product in itself.<sup>36</sup> As well as often being self-initiated, the funding or reward model of these alternative models of architectural practice activities must also be recognised as operating outside the conventions of professional practice. While at times this form of practice may be voluntary, it is increasingly common to see architects operating as social enterprises, working on projects launched via crowd-funding, developing projects through research networks and grants or by application to cultural institutions.

### 1.1.1 The production of (urban) space

The emerging discourse on 'alternative' architectural practice frequently draws upon the influential writing of Henri Lefebvre, and his criticism of the 'totalising' forces of urban planning that have dominated the production of the modern city. Lefebvre argued that spatial 'abstractions', which attempt to establish rules or relations between people and objects, will always fundamentally fail as they cannot possibly embrace the complexity and fluidity of the city as lived space.<sup>37</sup> A wide range of authors and critics that have developed upon the ideas in 'The Production of Space'. One example is the critic Christine Boyer, who argues that professionals and agencies involved in the development of the built environment have, for many years, been poorly prepared for reconciling the complexity

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<sup>34</sup> Jane Rendell, *Art and Architecture : A Place between* (London ; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2006), p. 191.

<sup>35</sup> Awan, Schneider and Till.

<sup>36</sup> Rendell, *Art and Architecture*, p. 157.

<sup>37</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 1991), p. 41; J. Corner, 'The Agency of Mapping: Speculation, Critique and Invention', in *Mappings*, ed. by Denis Cosgrove (London: Reaktion Books, 1999), pp. 213–52 (p. 251).

and chaos of real lives with the abstract thinking of urban planning.<sup>38</sup> Others have argued that the desire of built environment practitioners to remain at arm's length from the messy reality of everyday life is rooted in the aim of these professions to mitigate their exposure to risk.<sup>39</sup>

In recent years, the emphasis of urban planning has shifted, with researchers and practitioners in urban planning and design placing much greater significance on 'place-making' and 'community-led' regeneration. Despite the positive rhetoric, commercial interests permeate almost all aspects of professional practices of architecture and regeneration. Architects principally design buildings and spaces on the terms of those who can afford to buy their services – those who can afford and control land. Consequently, architectural design is often employed as a means of increasing commercial value through speculative development, or increasingly as a marketing tool to attract visitors or commerce from rival organisations, cities, regions or nations. Critics therefore remain sceptical of centrally-imposed and run programmes that purport to hand over creative and decision-making powers to ordinary people. Planning professionals, developers, designers and politicians may each hold a different set of reservations about participatory programmes, believing they increase costs, create delay, introduce emotional considerations and self-interest, and can create controversy rather than consensus. In addition, some planners may lack the political resources or creative skills to overcome entrenched bureaucratic values that limit participation.<sup>40</sup> Other critics have warned that attempts to increase participation in the production of the built environment are simply papering over the structural inequalities in society, and overlook the 'totalising' force of global capitalism.

### 1.1.2 Expanding professional practice

The professionalised and commercial nature of mainstream architectural practice is well-established, and is typically defined by the liabilities of professional indemnity, the demands of the market, and the contractual appointment of an architect by a paying client. In the UK this is set out by the Royal Institute of British Architects, with the RIBA's 'Plan of Work' broadly adopted as a definitive guide to the professional architectural process (as well as being commonly used by other professionals across the construction industry).<sup>41</sup> Critics of this model have highlighted the multiple ways that

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<sup>38</sup> M. Christine Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory: Its Historical Imagery and Architectural Entertainments* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1996), p. 18.

<sup>39</sup> Katherine Vaughan Williams, 'We Need Artists' Ways of Doing Things: A Critical Analysis of the Role of the Artist in Regeneration Practice', in *Architecture and participation*, ed. by Peter Blundell-Jones, Doina Petrescu, and Jeremy Till (London: Spon Press, 2005), pp. 217–25 (pp. 221–222).

<sup>40</sup> Raymond J. Burby, 'Making Plans That Matter: Citizen Involvement and Government Action', *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 69 (2003), 33–49.

<sup>41</sup> RIBA, 'RIBA Plan of Work 2013', *RIBA Plan of Work 2013*, 2013 <<http://www.ribaplanofwork.com/>> [accessed 21 June 2013].

architectural practice might potentially operate beyond the limits and limitations of the Plan of Work, and the restrictions that a formal contractual appointment from a land-owning client or developer places on developing new forms of practice.<sup>42</sup> Of particular concern is the reduction of architectural practice to commodity or product. According to Brook and Dunn, this represents a wider cultural shift in the role of architecture, with a much diminished role in proactively addressing human and social issues.<sup>43</sup> In addition, the constraints of professional frameworks (such as the requirement for Professional Indemnity Insurance) can have the impact of restricting individual architects to share their knowledge and work directly within local community projects. Moreover, the standardised RIBA Plan of Work fails to recognise the range of research and design activities that might happen well in advance of any client appointment, or outside of any formal contractual engagement altogether. Examples include research, mapping and hosting debates around local or contested sites, engagement activities (prior to appointment) to understand to needs or desires of a local community, collaboration with other creative practitioners in creating interdisciplinary events, exhibitions or interventions that challenge the notion of the 'expert' professional by inviting other people into the processes of architectural design and spatial production.

### 1.1.3 Acting (and performing) otherwise

A common feature of both architecture and performance is the sense of a vague and elusive disciplinary boundary. While some scholars and practitioners continue to attempt to alleviate the anxiety of by defining the limits of the disciplines, this sense of elusiveness is also part of the appeal and, as Turner suggests, offers 'hope for future actions'.<sup>44</sup> Like the 'performance architecture' movement described by Gadanho and others, the examples of participatory and activist practice described above (and the accompanying critical debate) are often still perceived as occupying or exploring the radical fringes of the discipline of architecture. In contrast, participatory or 'relational' forms of practice have seen a surge of interest within the fields of public art and performance, with the accompanying critical frameworks now relatively well-established.<sup>45</sup> The relative openness of art and performance-making enables practitioners to experiment in participatory projects while avoiding much of the disciplinary tensions associated with research and practice in architecture. This

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<sup>42</sup> Jeremy Till, 'Architecture Is Not Architecture Is Not Architecture Is Not Architecture' (presented at the Research Symposium: Changing Practices, London: RIBA, 2009) <<http://www.architecture.com/Files/RIBAProfessionalServices/ResearchAndDevelopment/Symposium/2009/JeremyTill.pdf>> [accessed 7 December 2013].

<sup>43</sup> Richard Brook and Nick Dunn, *Urban Maps: Instruments of Narrative and Interpretation in the City* (Farnham; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2011), p. 231.

<sup>44</sup> C. Turner, 'Mis-Guidance and Spatial Planning: Dramaturgies of Public Space', *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 20 (2010), 149–61 (p. 149).

<sup>45</sup> Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London ; New York: Verso Books, 2012), p. 1.

thesis therefore turns to performance studies and theories of site-specific and participatory forms of performance to widen the scope of spatial agency and inform 'other ways of doing architecture'.

## 1.2 The site(s) of the research

### 1.2.1 Sites of urban regeneration

As a research project that engages with the professional practices of architecture and performance, it is significant that this research is sited within the regional context of northern England - outside what might be characterised as the dominant cultural and economic sphere of London. The link between London and the architectural profession continues to be particularly strong, with around two-thirds of architects based in London and the south-east of the UK.<sup>46</sup> This statistic reflects the economic power of London as a global city, reflected by the continuing surge in house prices and land values that have kept architectural design practice relatively buoyant even in the context of a recession. While London house prices rose by 10.6% in 2013, prices in the north-east of England fell by 1.6%.<sup>47</sup> These figures are an illustration of the growing regional inequality, particularly in inner-city urban areas. Following the 20<sup>th</sup> century economic shocks of post-industrialisation and restructuring of the regional economy, northern urban areas have struggled to generate levels of prosperity found in other parts of the UK. After several years of heavy investment by the Regional Development Agencies, a large-scale PFI programme funding programme for new schools and hospitals and a boom in the construction of city centre apartments, the recession has left many cities and towns across northern England struggling to restart the processes of urban regeneration. Centrally-funded urban regeneration programmes, such as the flagship 'Housing Market Renewal', have been cut or scrapped altogether, with a knock-on impact on the confidence of private developers.<sup>48</sup> Major redevelopment projects have stalled in cities such as Bradford, Sheffield, and Hull, with many other urban areas affected by high levels of vacant commercial property. This economic and political inertia often manifests as gaps in the urban fabric – fenced off sites or derelict properties often occupying land previously considered to be 'prime' for development.

In spatial terms, these types of urban gap or void have been described using the term 'interstitial' – a concept that describing spaces that fall in between other more solid or well-established boundary

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<sup>46</sup> A figure of 64% was provided by Architects Registered Board (ARB) following email correspondence with the author in April 2014. Practitioners have a legal duty under the Architects Act to register with the ARB in order to use the title 'architect'. This does apply to those practicing under other titles such as 'architectural designer' or 'urbanist', and no current figures are available for those other practitioners / practices.

<sup>47</sup> Rupert Jones, 'November House Prices Highlight Wide Regional Differences', *The Guardian*, 31 December 2013, section Money <<http://www.theguardian.com/money/2013/dec/31/november-house-prices-london-rise>> [accessed 24 March 2014].

<sup>48</sup> An extended discussion of the Housing Market Renewal policy is undertaken in the Liverpool/Anfield case study in chapter 7.

conditions. However, the concept can be used to denote gaps in time as well as space.<sup>49</sup> In this sense, interstices can become sites of opportunity.<sup>50</sup> Several examples of the ‘spatial agencies’ described in the previous section might be thought of as operating in the temporal and spatial opportunities offered by interstitial urban sites. According to the urban theorist Nicolas-Le Strat, interstitial space embodies what is (in a sense) ‘available’ in the city, although this appearance of availability is always underpinned by a set of broader political, legal, social or economic issues.<sup>51</sup> Aurigi and Graham have conceptualised interstitial urban areas as ‘off-line spaces’ - sites that have become ‘unplugged’ from the city. This unplugging might be linked to a number of complex and interdependent issues – depopulation, welfare and the labour market reform, the collapse of local or national industries, or the withdrawal of public services.<sup>52</sup> These spaces can therefore be conceived as embodying the troubled or contradictory aspects of the city that are often masked by urban (re)development and regeneration. Examples of this phenomenon might be identified in cities across the globe, but can also be identified within urban contexts local to the site of this research in northern England. Bradford’s Westfield ‘hole’, Hull’s Fruit Market (chapter 6), Sheffield’s Lower Don Valley (chapter 8), or the widespread areas of demolition left following the cessation of the Pathfinder Housing Market Renewal programme in Liverpool (chapter 7) might be identified as interstitial in nature – where residents, businesses, industries, and communities have been severely affected by failed regeneration efforts and the socio-spatial impact of the recent economic downturn.

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<sup>49</sup> Luc Levesque, ‘The “terrain Vague” as Material – Some Observations’, in *HOUSE BOAT / OCCUPATIONS SYMBIOTIQUES* (Hull/Gatineau: AXENÉO7, 2002) <[http://www.amarrages.com/textes\\_terrain.html](http://www.amarrages.com/textes_terrain.html)> [accessed 2 February 2013].

<sup>50</sup> *Urban Interstices: The Aesthetics and the Politics of the in-Between*, ed. by Andrea Mubi Brighenti (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013).

<sup>51</sup> Pascal Nicolas-Le-Strat, ‘Interstitial Multiplicity’, in *Urban ACT*, trans. by Millay Hyatt (Paris: AAA-peprav, 2007), pp. 314–18 <<http://www.peprav.net/tool/spip.php?article51>> [accessed 29 December 2011].

<sup>52</sup> Stephen Graham and Alessandro Aurigi, ‘Virtual Cities, Social Polarization, and the Crisis in Urban Public Space’, *The Journal of Urban Technology*, 4 (1997), 19–52.



Figure 1.1. The locations of the three central case studies that form the empirical research of this thesis. Each of the cases explores a particular site of urban regeneration within the context of northern England. Image: author.

### 1.2.2 The institutional site

The institutional context of this research is as part of the 'RECITE' network – funded internally as part of the University of Sheffield 'Digital World' theme. This is a wide-ranging, inter and trans-disciplinary theme covering the “development, use, and impact of Digital Technologies in a range of different disciplines and user environments, including health, society, the arts, and humanities”.<sup>53</sup> The RECITE network bridges the School of Architecture, School of English and the Department of Computer Science at the University of Sheffield. Academics, research students and supervisory teams from these three departments were brought together with the aim of cross-fertilising research proposals and fostering emerging collaborations.<sup>54</sup> The main aim of RECITE is to undertake interdisciplinary research into methodologies and technologies for the mapping, modelling and documentation of urban space and contemporary models of performance. This intersection of performance, urban space and digital technology provides the setting for a wealth of research

<sup>53</sup> The University of Sheffield, 'RECITE' <<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/recite>> [accessed 17 February 2014].

<sup>54</sup> The University of Sheffield, 'RECITE'.



opportunities. Christine Oddey describes the important moment of this interdisciplinary investigation - a 'blurring of boundaries' between research and arts practice, catalysed by new technologies, where a new understanding of space and performance is emerging.<sup>55</sup>

Within the overall framework of RECITE, a number of specific fields of inquiry were identified in between and across the three disciplines, informed by the research interests of the individual academics involved.

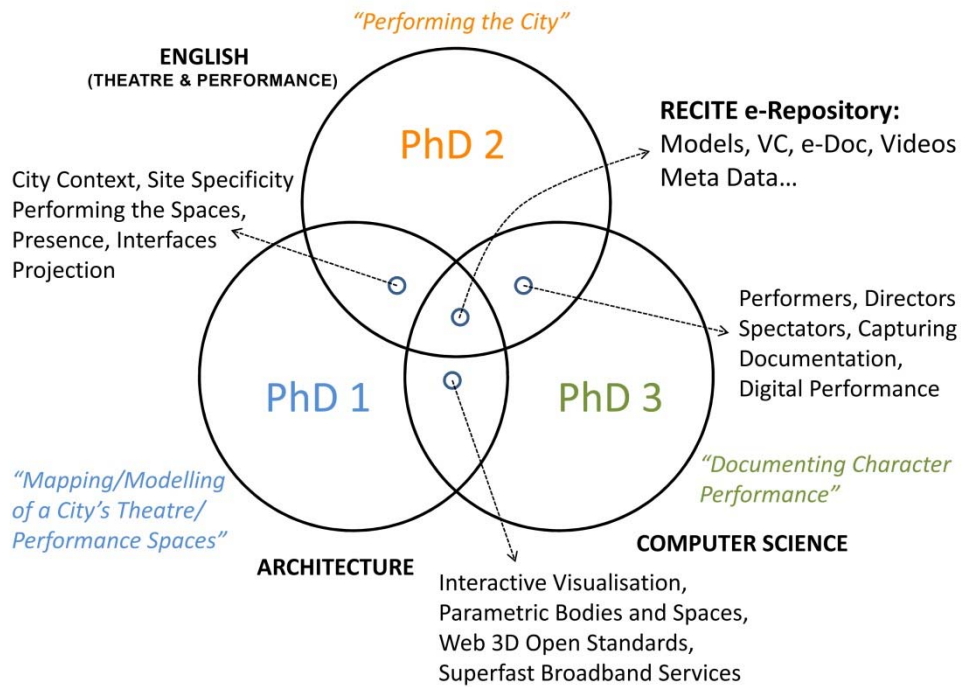


Figure 1.2. RECITE Network diagram (produced by author & Dr Chengzhi Peng, Convenor of the RECITE Network)

While the research questions of each RECITE PhD project were initiated from a specific disciplinary background, broader engagement with the other disciplines in the network (both conceptually and methodologically) has been actively encouraged – an engagement that been central to the development of this research. Each doctoral research student was allocated at least one supervisor from a different department, which was supplemented with regular contact with other academics and research students in the network. In practice, it has not been possible to remain entirely open to influence from all three disciplines throughout any one project, particularly in the context of a doctoral research and the development of a realistic scope of research questions. For example, this

<sup>55</sup> Alison Oddey, 'Different Directions : The Potentials of Autobiographical Space', in *The potentials of spaces: the theory and practice of scenography & performance* (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2006), pp. 33–49 (p. 47).

project (represented as 'PhD 1' in Figure 1.2) became allied with a specific area of theatre and performance studies and, as a result, the relation to the field of computer science became less significant during the course of this research.

### **1.3 Research questions and methodology**

This thesis began as broad exploration of the myriad ways in which performance practices might inform and enrich the discipline of architecture. Following a broad survey of literature and practice, the focus of the thesis narrowed to examine the potential impact of site-specific performance practice within a particular 'interstitial' urban condition. The three central research questions are framed thus:

- 1- How might contemporary site-specific performance practices act as a means for understanding and mapping 'interstitial' urban sites?**
- 2- To what extent might these practices critique existing urban regeneration, planning, and design process in these contexts (and propose alternatives)?**
- 3- What implications might (1) and (2) have in shaping future practices of architecture and urbanism?**

This study aims to build upon existing interdisciplinary theories in understanding site-specific performance as 'mapping'. The approach includes the evaluation of interdisciplinary sources from theatre and performance studies, art practice, geography, urban studies, and architecture as well as research and analysis of contemporary performances in cities across the UK. The process began with a review of the existing methodological landscape in performance studies and, following the so-called 'expansion' of site, the closely related field of participatory art practice. This involved the identification of potential case studies and design of a pilot project - testing the provisional research questions and developing a first-hand understanding of the way in different models of site-specific performance respond to interstitial urban sites through their conception, design, production, and reception.

The research design of this phase has been shaped by ongoing epistemological and methodological debates around the evaluation and interpretation of art and performance that engages with concepts (community, society, place, agency) that are more readily recognisable within the social sciences and spatial disciplines.<sup>56</sup> As well as a reaction to both an interdisciplinary expansion of the concept of performance, these debates reflect recent attempts (often politically driven) to demonstrate measurable impacts of arts and performance practice through the adoption of

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<sup>56</sup> Bishop, p. 7.

positivist epistemologies and quantitative methodologies. Moving beyond these ideological debates, scholars in performance studies (and the related fields of reception studies) have employed approaches that adapt qualitative methodologies and methodologies from mainstream and the more experimental branches of the social sciences. This is a field still very much in flux, with approaches including ethnographic and auto-ethnographic methods, action research, visual methods, and practice-led research.

The empirical research of the thesis has been carried out in three central case-study sites (performances) and supported by a number of other cases (contemporary site-specific performance and arts practices).<sup>57</sup> The empirical research examines and interprets the multiple ways in which site-specific performances impact upon their participants and the wider urban context by documenting the lived experiences of the performers, participants, and institutions involved in a range of contemporary site-specific performances. Through the analysis of case study data, literature and first-hand experience of live performances, this thesis aims to construct a broader critique of site-specific performance as a 'critical spatial practice' in the context of architecture and urbanism. The aims of the thesis can be summarised as follows:

- Use theory from a range of disciplines (including performance studies, the visual arts, geography, architecture, and urban planning) to understand the ways in which site-specific performance operates as a 'critical spatial practice'.
- Establish a framework to analyse a series of contemporary practices of site-specific performance (siting/ conceiving/ producing/ performing/ evaluating).
- Develop and test a methodology to understand and evaluate the impact of site-specific performance practices in a series of case-study sites/ performances.

On the basis of this analysis and interpretation, the thesis goes on to examine the role that site-specific performance practice might play within architecture and urbanism - representing a broad set of participatory principles for architectural design/ research and a particular set of tools and approaches for mapping complex urban sites. This broader aim positions this research within the transformative knowledge tradition, and therefore seeks to encourage architects, urbanists and other spatial designers to reflect upon and improve existing practices.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> See appendix 1 for a 'directory' of site-specific practices (supporting cases) referred to in the thesis.

<sup>58</sup> Jeremy Till, 'The Negotiation of Hope', in *Architecture and Participation*, ed. by Peter Blundell Jones, Doina Petrescu, and Jeremy Till (London ; New York: Spon Press, 2005), pp. 23–42 (p. 28).

## 1.4 Thesis structure

### 1.4.1 Literature review

The first three chapters of the thesis comprise of a literature and practice review. Each of the three chapters begins from a different disciplinary position, but is structured in a way that develops links between performance and architecture/ urbanism. The shift in and out of the discipline of performance studies reflects the transient or provisional nature of interdisciplinary (or cross-disciplinary) research, and is an ongoing theme in the thesis.

Opening with an exploration of theories of contemporary performance, **chapter 2** begins outside of the traditional research territory of an 'architectural' thesis. The chapter further defines the critical terms of 'performance' and 'site-specificity', and explores the way in which contemporary performance-makers have become drawn to issues of city, site, and place - developing new forms of interaction between performers, participants, and the (urban) environment.

**Chapter 3** builds upon the notion that forms of 'peripatetic' performance practice (those that involve walking in or travelling through in the city) might operate as means of 'mapping' urban space. Opening with an overview to the field of critical cartography, the chapter draws upon the writing of James Corner, post-structuralist theory and avant-garde art practice and explores the way in which art practice, urban planning and architecture can be linked back to peripatetic performance through the common activities of exploring, sensing, and mapping the city. The chapter closes with an overview of the different ways in which performance practice might work to 'map' urban sites.

With a shift in focus back to themes of urban planning and regeneration, **chapter 4** examines the role of participation in the shaping urban built environments. The level of local participation in the production of the built environment has previously been closely tied to local governance structures and the professional domains of planning and architecture. More recently, site-specific artists and performance-makers have begun to directly (and intentionally) address themes of urban regeneration and participation – both in choice of sites and subject matter. This leads the chapter into a more detailed discussion of the role of participation within art and performance practice, and the way in which contemporary practitioners have addressed questions of ethics, impact, and 'instrumentalisation' within participatory practice. The chapter concludes by drawing together themes and issues from participation in both performance and architecture/ urbanism – setting up the context for the three case studies.

### 1.4.2 Methodology

Moving on from the literature and practice review section, **chapter 5** sets out the methodological framework of the thesis and the scope of the empirical and practice-led research. The first section of this chapter is a taxonomy of contemporary site-specific performance practices. The aim of this introductory section is to shift the focus back to practice, identifying ways in which contemporary models of site-specific performance (including guided tours, audio-walks, and peripatetic performance) mediate the dynamic three-way relationship between performer (or performance-maker), participant, and site. The chapter goes on to explore some of the key methodological concepts from the social sciences, design research, and performance studies research. This is followed by a discussion of the interdisciplinary tensions that have arisen during the design and undertaking of the first two case-studies, and the way in which these tensions have been addressed by the design of a collaborative, practice-led approach in the third and final case study.

### 1.4.3 Case studies

**Chapters 6, 7, and 8** are dedicated to the three case-study performances. Each chapter contains contextual information and discussion of the live performance alongside details and analysis of the empirical research data collected in relation to the performance. The three site-specific performances examined in this section of the thesis (*'Mapping the City'*, *'The Anfield Home Tour'*, and *'The Port of Sheffield'*) share a number of common characteristics. All three performances are sited within an 'interstitial' urban context that has resulted from some form of stalled urban regeneration. Each performance adopts a different interpretation of 'participatory' performance-making, and the structure of the three works can all be described as a 'peripatetic' form of performance. While these criteria have been significant in identifying potential cases and eliminating others, each of the three central case-study performances is markedly different in the way that they relate to, interpret, and articulate the story of a particular spatial and social context. Each of the three case studies is therefore used to explore and understand a different facet of performance and its relationship with its site of production and reception.

### 1.4.4 Discussion/ conclusion and appendices

The thesis concludes with a discussion of the key issues drawn from the three central case studies and supporting projects. These discussions are distilled into a conclusion, which outlines the implications and recommendations for architectural and urbanist practice and is followed by potential suggestions for further research in between the two fields.

**Appendix 1** sets out a selection of site-specific practices' that have been influential in developing this research. This directory includes details of 36 supporting examples of site-specific performance

practice (practitioners and performances) that are referenced in other sections of the thesis. Further information related to the research methodology is detailed in **appendix 2**, including the selection of methods for data collection. Interview transcripts and supporting documentation carried out in connection to the three case studies are contained within **appendix 3**. **Appendix 4** contains further information related to the development of the 'Port of Sheffield' audio-walk (chapter 8), including project contributors, a description of the development process for the Port of Sheffield mobile application and excerpts of the original computer code (Javascript / HTML) developed for the project by the author. Details of the research ethics applications and approvals for the empirical research can be found in **appendix 5**.

## 2 Site-specific performance: Key concepts and theories

### 2.0 Introduction

In recent years there has been a marked increase in interest in issues of site and place in theatre, performance studies, and a range of other artistic practices.<sup>1</sup> By leaving the traditional theatre building or auditorium and inhabiting existing physical and social situations, the critical concerns of what is typically referred to as 'site-specific' performance begin to intersect with those of spatial disciplines - geography, urban studies, planning and architecture. In the context of performance, the term 'site-specific' only began to become widely used in the mid to late 1980s.<sup>2</sup> Its roots can be traced back to the experimental performances in the 1960s and 70s, led by the "Happenings" of Allan Kaprow, environmental art, land art, and the work of the Fluxus movement.<sup>3</sup> Although the precise nature of what constitutes (a) 'site-specific' performance is still contested, the term broadly covers performance and live art that emerges from, and is conditioned by, the place or site in which it happens.<sup>4</sup> The relationship between these practices and the sites that they inhabit is now commonly understood as a two-way process, with site-specificity defined in terms of the exchange that it articulates between (a) performance and (a) place.<sup>5</sup> Within these broad definitions there is enormous variation in methods, practices, political intentions and aesthetic forms.

The introductory chapter put forward the emergence of the interdisciplinary field of 'performance architecture' as the context and departure point for this thesis. The literature reviewed in this chapter begins to examine the theoretical grounding of these practices by stepping into the field of performance studies and returning to the origins and key theories of performance. The initial aim of this literature review is to construct a working definition of 'performance' - one that is grounded within the work of key performance theorists, yet open enough to accommodate the range of interdisciplinary thinking that is introduced in the later chapters. Following this, the chapter aims to build a platform for the remainder of the thesis by introducing and defining the concept of site-specificity, before identifying the key motivations, operations, and concerns of site-specific performance practice.

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<sup>1</sup> Sally Mackey and Nicolas Whybrow, 'Taking Place: Some Reflections on Site, Performance and Community', 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Fiona Wilkie, 'Mapping the Terrain: A Survey of Site-Specific Performance in Britain', *New Theatre Quarterly*, 18 (2002), 140–60 (p. 141).

<sup>3</sup> Nick Kaye, *Site-Specific Art: Performance, Place and Documentation* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 91.

<sup>4</sup> Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks, *Theatre/Archaeology* (London: Routledge, 2001).

<sup>5</sup> Nick Kaye, *Site-Specific Art: Performance, Place and Documentation* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 1.

## 2.1 Performance, efficacy and entertainment

As briefly touched upon in the thesis introduction, the field of performance studies emerged through the collaboration between Richard Schechner and anthropologist Victor Turner. It is appropriate to describe this as a 'field' rather than a 'discipline' due to the inherently open, multivocal and interdisciplinary nature of performance.<sup>6</sup> Following the so-called 'performative turn', anything and everything can be studied 'as' performance. However, whether a particular event 'is' a performance (to a lesser or greater extent than any other) is still contested by theatre and performance critics.<sup>7</sup> Schechner's classic performance studies text, 'Performance Theory', defines performance through an examination of the structural elements or rules of a series of performance-like activities - play, games, sports, theatre and ritual. These five activities often share a number of characteristics, and Schechner identifies the most important of these as being their 'non-productivity'.<sup>8</sup> This follows Roger Caillois, who famously defined a key characteristic of play as being the fact that it 'creates no wealth or goods'.<sup>9</sup> Though some performative activities such as sports (and to a lesser extent games) may involve an array of associated economic and professional activities, the *form* of the activity is shaped by something other than the economic arrangements of labour or production.<sup>10</sup> It is a constant for all players, whatever the level of performance.

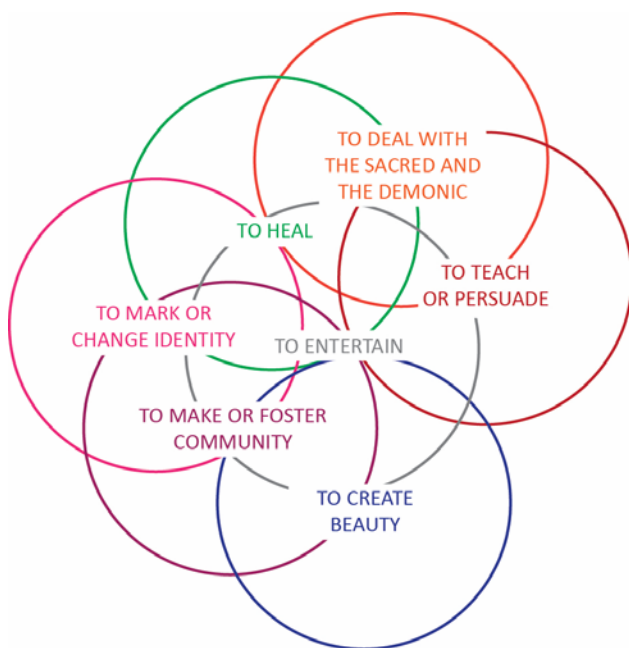


Figure 2.1. Seven interlocking spheres of performance practice. Reproduced from Schechner (2013). p.46.

<sup>6</sup> Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, p. 24.

<sup>7</sup> Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, p. 38.

<sup>8</sup> Richard Schechner, *Performance Theory*, Rev. and expanded ed. (New York ; London: Routledge, 1988), p. 11.

<sup>9</sup> Roger Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, trans. by Meyer Barash (New York: Free Press, 1961), p. 21.

<sup>10</sup> Schechner, *Performance Theory*, p. 10.



Schechner has examined the characteristics of these activities by examining the intentionality of different modes of performance (see Figure 2.1 and Table 2.1). A similar principle is established by Michael Kirby's 'theatrical matrix' of time place and character, subsequently adopted and developed by Marvin Carlson.<sup>11</sup> In Kirby's theorisation, the 'matrixed' performance of traditional theatre is set up in opposition to the 'real-life action' of the form of performance events that emerged in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century. These events might be thought of as sharing a greater number of characteristics with activities outside the theatre - parties, sporting events, public meetings and so on. The term 'Happening' describes one such form of performance, and has been particularly influential in the evolution of site-specific performance. Kaprow defined these one-off events as an expanded concept of theatre, just as an expanded notion of painting might include collage.<sup>12</sup> The sites of the 'most intense and essential' Happenings were in derelict buildings, vacant shops, and out in the street. The format was fluid, with no separation of performance space and audience space, so that spectators or passers-by mingled and participated within the event.<sup>13</sup>

	<i>Play</i>	<i>Games</i>	<i>Sports</i>	<i>Theater</i>	<i>Ritual</i>
Special ordering of time	Usually	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Special value for objects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Non-productive	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rules	Inner	Frame	Frame	Frame	Outer
Special place	No	Often	Yes	Yes	Usually
Appeal to other	No	Often	Yes	Yes	Yes
Audience	Not necessarily	Not necessarily	Usually	Yes	Usually
Self-assertive	Yes	Not totally	Not totally	Not totally	No
Self-transcendent	No	Not totally	Not totally	Not totally	Yes
Completed	Not necessarily	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Performed by group	Not necessarily	Usually	Usually	Yes	Usually
Symbolic reality	Often	No	No	Yes	Often
Scripted	Sometimes/No	No	No	Yes	Usually

*Note:* Happenings and related activities are *not* included as theater in this chart. Happenings would not necessarily have an audience, they would not necessarily be scripted, there would be no necessary symbolic reality. Formally, they would be very close to play.

Table 2.1 Schechner's 'performance chart'. Reproduced from Schechner 1988 p.12

Schechner's differentiation between 'orthodox' and new forms of performance (such as the 'Happenings') is more precisely related to the rules of the activity. While the rules of traditional theatre establish a frame for social behaviour and are therefore closer in structure to sport and games, the 'rules' of other forms of performance are either set by the player (as in play) or by the larger forces of society (as in ritual).<sup>14</sup> Comparisons between theatrical performance and play can

<sup>11</sup> Marvin Carlson, *Places of Performance: Semiotics of Theatre Architecture*, New edition (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 204; Marvin Carlson, 'David Levine's Bauerntheater: The Return of the Matrix', *The Drama Review*, 52 (2008), 34–43 (p. 34).

<sup>12</sup> Allan Kaprow, *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, ed. by Jeff Kelley (Berkeley, CA; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003).

<sup>13</sup> Kaprow, pp. 15–18.

<sup>14</sup> Schechner, *Performance Theory*, p. 13.

also be linked back into Caillois' theory of **ludus** (the binding of play with conventions and rules) and **paidia** (uncontrolled exuberance and spontaneity) as the two components that, in variable quantities, make up all play and games.<sup>15</sup> By placing traditional forms of auditorium-based theatre at the extreme end of the ludus-paidia spectrum, art critic Nicolas Whybrow defines theatre as the ultimate institutionalisation and the subordination of play in the name of high art.<sup>16</sup> Whybrow's criticism refers back to Henri Lefebvre's criticisms of theatre and calls for it to be freed from privileged and complacent institutions and individuals. Recalling the disruptive nature of the Situationist practices, Lefebvre's aim was to redirect the artistic effort of performance back to the urban realm and the street, freeing it to take place as play (paidia) or unpredictable encounter.<sup>17</sup> This was not to be confused with a literal call for 'prettifying' urban space (or taking existing theatre outdoors) but art as 'praxis or poiesis on a social scale'.<sup>18</sup> Lefebvre's distinctly political aims can be identified in the efficacy strand of Schechner's efficacy-entertainment braid (as identified in Table 2.2.2). Again, these two positions are theorised as two ends of a continuum, with most forms of performance falling somewhere between the two extreme positions. Despite this, there is a clear association between the efficacy and 'transformative' potential of site-specific forms of performance, while entertainment is associated (somewhat disparagingly) with the class-orientation and show-business of commercial theatre, theme parks and street entertainers.<sup>19</sup>

Perhaps the most important characteristic of the efficacy strand of the braid is the open, participatory and collective nature of 'unmatrixed' performance. Whereas the spectator's position within the theatre auditorium is closely associated with ticket price and social class, site-specific performance-makers frequently encourage or oblige spectators to move, walk, and participate in the performance. This shift is aligned with the wider movement of postmodern art, where much greater agency is handed over to the spectator to define their own experience.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Caillois.

<sup>16</sup> Nicolas Whybrow, *Art and the City* (London ; New York: I B Tauris & Co Ltd, 2010), p. 104.

<sup>17</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, trans. by Elenore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas (Malden, MA; Oxford; Carlton: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), p. 173.

<sup>18</sup> Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, p. 173.

<sup>19</sup> Schechner, *Performance Theory*, p. 123.

<sup>20</sup> Gay McAuley, *Space in Performance: Making Meaning in the Theatre* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), p. 276.

EFFICACY Ritual	↔	ENTERTAINMENT Theater
results link to an absent Other symbolic time performer possessed, in trance audience participates audience believes criticism discouraged collective creativity		fun Only for those here emphasis now performer knows what s/he's doing audience watches audience appreciates criticism flourishes individual creativity

Table 2.2. Reproduced from Schechner 1988 p.120

Other authors are more critical, arguing that the separation of efficacy and entertainment or 'theatre' and 'performance' is unproductive. Stephen Bottoms and others argue that the artificial division between 'theatre' (as dramatic literature acted out in a purpose-built building) and 'performance' (everything else) is not only short sighted, but that Schechner's focus on efficacy has resulted in 'serious conceptual blindspots' in the field of performance studies.<sup>21</sup> Bottoms rejects the notion that theatre and performance must have 'use-value', arguing that the instrumentalisation of performance might even blunt its critical potential. Baz Kershaw also draws upon Jon McKenzie's 'Perform or Else' to challenge the modernist binary of as/is performance put forward by Schechner.<sup>22</sup> McKenzie argues that the separation of everyday performance and the bounded performance event is unproductive, particularly in the context of postmodern thinking and the relation to concepts of agency, knowledge, and power.<sup>23</sup> Peterman introduces the concepts of 'praxis' and 'poesis' as ways of differentiating between the different ways of understanding performance in the wake of the performative turn. Firstly, performance as poesis or '*making* something of communication' (theatre, the visual arts, ritual, music, storytelling, and poetry) sets this process apart from 'ordinary' or everyday modes of communication. The second view casts performance or storytelling as praxis or the '*doing* of communication' - intrinsic to the everyday practice of conversing with others.<sup>24</sup> All performance practices (including site-specific performance) combine aspects of these two views (praxis and poesis). A similarly binary reading of site-specific

<sup>21</sup> McKenzie, p. 50; Bottoms, p. 181.

<sup>22</sup> Baz Kershaw, *Research Methods in Theatre and Performance*, ed. by Baz Kershaw and Helen Nicholson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), pp. 3–4.

<sup>23</sup> McKenzie.

<sup>24</sup> Eric E Peterson, 'Performance and Storytelling', in *21st Century Communication: A Reference Handbook* (Thousand Oaks, CA.: SAGE, 2009), pp. 147–56 (p. 1) (original emphasis)  
[http://www.sagepub.com/edwards/study/materials/reference/77593\\_13.1ref.pdf](http://www.sagepub.com/edwards/study/materials/reference/77593_13.1ref.pdf) [accessed 31 October 2013].

performance also features prominently in Jen Harvie's text 'Theatre and the City'.<sup>25</sup> Harvie proposes two very different ways of reading a performance event: 'cultural materialism' (a performance as a bounded event supported by material conditions), and 'performative analysis' (the potential for performing to create and shape participants' individual identities within the city). Harvie identifies both of these readings as serving an important role in the theorisation of performance, and her analysis of site-specific practices attempts to reconcile the two strategies.

Amid these territorial debates between theatre and performance studies, it is vital not to overlook the increasing significance of performance within a range of contemporary art practices. As Nicolas Whybrow describes, there has been an "unquestionable incursion of performance and/or eventhood into the making, presentation and experience of contemporary art practices".<sup>26</sup> These practices include 'participatory' or dialogic art practice, artistic mapping projects, psychogeographic and other forms of walking practice, activist modes of practice, as well as technological forms of performance such as location-based media events and 'pervasive gaming'.<sup>27</sup> The selection of practices (and there are undoubtedly others) demonstrates the broad interdisciplinary focus of this thesis - contemporary performance and art practices that are primarily interested in exploring the relationship between people and (a) place.

As Schechner suggests, performance studies 'resists fixed definition' and operates 'best' in an open, multivocal, dense web of interdisciplinary connections.<sup>28</sup> While the openness of performance studies is central to its appeal, there are also problems associated with attempting to borrow and apply tools and theories from a 'field without limits'. Critics such as McAuley have warned of 'casting the net wider and wider and accepting an ever-expanding range of performance practices as legitimate objects of study'.<sup>29</sup> This also highlights the importance of understanding the cultural context of social practice – as a 'performance' in one culture may mean something completely different somewhere else. Writing from the perspective of a Western performance scholar (with a background in theatre), McAuley proposes two key conditions to define the boundaries of 'performance':

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<sup>25</sup> Harvie and Etchells, pp. 8–10.

<sup>26</sup> Whybrow, p. 5.

<sup>27</sup> 'Pervasive games' extend the temporal, spatial or social dimensions of traditional gaming. They might last days or weeks, occupying a different place in the lives of players. They might be played across cities or countries, driven by the rise of mobile devices and location technologies such as GPS. They might extend socially so that others (non-players) are inadvertently part of the game. Definition adapted from Blast Theory, 'RESEARCH: IPERG (2005-2008)', *Blast Theory* <[http://www.blasttheory.co.uk/bt/work\\_research\\_iperg.html](http://www.blasttheory.co.uk/bt/work_research_iperg.html)> [accessed 29 December 2011].

<sup>28</sup> Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, p. 24.

<sup>29</sup> Gay McAuley, 'Interdisciplinary Field or Emerging Discipline? Performance Studies at the University of Sydney', in *Contesting Performance: Global Sites of Research*, ed. by Jon McKenzie, Heike Roms, and CJ Wanling Wee (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 37–50 (p. 45).

- the live presence of the performers and those witnessing it
- 'intentionality' on the part of performer, witness or both

In the wake of the emergence of new forms of performance supported by digital media and mobile technology, it could be argued that the first of these conditions tends too far towards a more traditional conception of theatre or theatricality. Indeed, one of the aims of this thesis is to develop a working categorisation of contemporary site-specific performance practice, and two out of the five models of practice identified in chapter 5 are marked by the absence of traditional 'live' performers. The second of McAuley's conditions is perhaps more useful in marking some sort of (blurred) distinction between 'performing arts' and 'daily life' on Schechner's identifiable continuum of performance practices (see Table 2.1).

In developing an open and flexible definition of performance for this thesis, it has been important to draw from both strands of the efficacy-entertainment braid and look beyond into contemporary technological and participatory forms of art and performance practice. In the literature review, case studies, supporting examples and theoretical grounding of the thesis, the term 'performance' is used to signify a broad number of interrelated practices. Nevertheless, in drawing links between performance practice and the epistemological worlds of architecture and urban planning, the thesis emphasises the efficacy/ritual and the 'praxis or poiesis' of performance. Indeed, concept of efficacy or 'effectiveness' is particularly significant to the research questions and will be explored in greater detail across the literature review and methodology chapters. The next section develops this idea further by focusing on another key development in performance - the move out of the conventional theatre building and onto site.

## 2.2 Performing in the city

*"Public space is the stage upon which the drama of communal life unfolds".*<sup>30</sup>

*"We are not simply observers of this (city) spectacle, but are ourselves a part of it, on the stage with the other participants".*<sup>31</sup>

*"In the street, a form of spontaneous theatre, I become spectacle, and spectator, and sometimes an actor. The street is where movement takes place, the interaction without which urban life would not exist, leaving only separation, a forced and fixed segregation".*<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Stephen Carr and others, *Public Space* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 3.

<sup>31</sup> Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1960), p. 2.

The above representations of the city as a stage appear with regularity in a range of architectural and urban theory.<sup>33</sup> In her influential text on art and spatial politics, Rosalind Deutsche offers three broad categorisations of art or performance in an urban context - the city 'as artwork' or urban life as a performance, the city as influencing the form or subject of artworks or performances, and finally artworks or performances situated within public and other outdoor spaces of the city.<sup>34</sup> While the notion of the city as a 'performing and performative entity' has provided a useful way of introducing some key urban theorists into the discussion of architecture and performance, the focus of this thesis is firmly directed towards the second and third of these categories.<sup>35</sup>

The creation of performance within urban public space is by no means a 20<sup>th</sup> century innovation, as its roots lie in traditional rituals of ancient civilisations. In the Medieval period theatre existed as an important part of urban life without a specific building devoted to its exclusive use. This meant that theatrical events could place on a site of the theatre choosing and take advantage of its existing connotations and location.<sup>36</sup> Often these were for the purpose of celebrating religious 'cycles', whereby the guilds sponsored the 'theatrical' transformation of whole cities such as York or Chester.<sup>37</sup> Christine Boyer talks about the history of theatre and performance as being 'fused to the city and its society' - drama reached out to instruct its audience with dialogue and moral argument.<sup>38</sup> The carnival is characterised by Richard Schechner as a form of 'direct theatre' - an exaggerated acting out of forbidden themes. Though the dates and places might be officially sanctioned by authorities as a way of letting citizens let off steam before they return to their daily rituals, such playing "challenges official culture's claims to authority, stability, sobriety, immutability and immortality".<sup>39</sup> Lefebvre also wrote about the vital role of play and the street festival as central to the urban dweller's participation in the city.<sup>40</sup> Giedion and Tsutomu describe our 'urgent desire' to participate in the carnival or street party - a spontaneous need to become more than just a 'passive onlooker', and to play our own part in social life whether as actor or spectator.<sup>41</sup> They describe a

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<sup>32</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, trans. by Robert Bononno (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), p. 18.

<sup>33</sup> Aldo Rossi, *The Architecture of the City* (Cambridge, Mass; London: MIT Press, 1999), p. 22.

<sup>34</sup> Rosalyn Deutsche, *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics* (Cambridge, Mass. ; London: MIT Press, 1998), pp. 80–81.

<sup>35</sup> Whybrow, p. 22.

<sup>36</sup> Carlson, *Places of Performance*, p. 14.

<sup>37</sup> Harvie and Etchells, p. 14.

<sup>38</sup> Boyer, p. 75.

<sup>39</sup> Richard Schechner, 'The Street Is the Stage', in *Radical Street Performance: An International Anthology*, ed. by Jan Cohen-Cruz (Abingdon, Oxon.: Routledge, 1998), pp. 196–207 (p. 196).

<sup>40</sup> Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, pp. 167–168.

<sup>41</sup> S. Giedion and I. Tsutomu, *Architecture, You and Me: The Diary of a Development* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958), p. 129.

street festival in Zurich, where ‘people danced in the streets under umbrellas, and medieval nooks and squares were used as open air theatres’.<sup>42</sup>

*“Suddenly we discovered that something still remains and that - given the opportunity - people will dance and put on plays in open spaces”.*<sup>43</sup>

The rediscovery of the great civic architectural forms during the Renaissance period led to the development of a Western European model, with structured forms of theatre produced and performed inside dedicated and enclosed theatrical spaces. Despite the enduring appeal of the urban carnival or street party, this structured model of what (a) theatre or performance ‘is’ has persisted into the 20<sup>th</sup> century and beyond.

One figure cited as being key to the reawakening of site-located performance for the purpose of embodying the meaning of a historic event was director Nikolai Evreinov and the 1920 recreation of the ‘The Storming of the Winter Palace’. This took place in the exact location of the original battle, with casts of thousands and genuine military props.<sup>44</sup> Further experimentation was somewhat limited until the latter part of the century, when the historic use of city as stage took on a new, more deliberate political and social dimension in the theatricality of political protests. The US civil rights movement and anti-Vietnam movements in the 1960s and 70s saw protestors adopting a form of ‘acting out’ the kind of society that they wanted to come into being.<sup>45</sup> These actions were happening alongside artistic anti-commercial explorations of the experiential nature and materiality of the environment, which challenged the modernist paradigm of idealist or ‘uncontaminated’ minimalism. Closely practices of installation and performance art, interactive theatrical explorations such as Richard Schechner’s environmental theatre, Allan Kaprow’s Happenings, and Armand Gatti’s experiments emphasised that site and its left-over traces had their own language - that the play could be authored by the environment and that performance-makers and artists should ‘let the space have its say’.<sup>46</sup> Laura Levin suggests that the importance of the Happenings and Environmental Theatre movement is often overlooked due to the quasi-spirituality, poetics and theatrical ‘aura’ associated with this period. Nonetheless, the Happenings have taken on a central role in the history of radical, participatory and site-based forms of performance. These events have also been seen as an important attempt to define a new form of creative spatial practice, and influential on a subsequent generation of architects, activists and performance-maker interested in reinventing

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<sup>42</sup> Giedion and Tsutomu, p. 129.

<sup>43</sup> Giedion and Tsutomu, p. 129.

<sup>44</sup> Marvin Carlson, *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine* (University of Michigan Press, 2008), p. 138.

<sup>45</sup> Schechner, ‘The Street Is the Stage’, p. 208.

<sup>46</sup> Schechner in Carlson, ‘The Iconic Stage’, pp. 14–15.

modes of being in space. At the time, Kaprow and others involved in the movement expressed a frustration at the limitations of the architectural discipline, and its inability to respond to radical forms of urban change. As Kaprow's call-to-arms suggested: "We cannot wait for the new architecture".<sup>47</sup>

### 2.3 Exiting the auditorium

The theatre is both destination and an enclosure as well as being, by tradition, the place of performance. However as Vito Acconci asserted, the theatre can only be an abstraction of the real world outside of the enclosure. In contrast to this abstract world, Acconci's practices were 'real-time incursions' into places that were already occupied and 'acted in'.<sup>48</sup> The first stage of constructing a clearer definition of contemporary site-specific performance is an examination of this distinction between traditional theatre and performance (in an auditorium or theatre building), and theatre and performance that takes place outdoors or in the 'the messy world itself'.<sup>49</sup>

This type of artistic practice could not exist without the impulse of practitioners to work in this way, and the review therefore begins with an examination of the motivations of site-specific or outdoor performance-makers. In his 1994 overview of the outdoor theatre practices in the UK, Bim Mason defines outdoor performance as not necessarily that which takes place outside, but away from the predefined structure of a theatre building.<sup>50</sup> This definition is reiterated and expanded in the 2008 review of outdoor arts entitled by the Arts Council (the central UK government arts body), to include arts installations and other 'time-limited' interventions.<sup>51</sup>

Discussing the upsurge in the forms of outdoor theatrical and arts activity in the 1990s, Mason suggested that the rediscovery of these practices is a result of the competition from mass media - first cinema, then TV and video. Because simple economics dictates that theatre cannot compete on the same terms as the mass media, alternative forms of live performance have developed. The unique offer of these forms, argues Mason, is a different form of participation - a blurring of the boundary between performance and social event, expanding the range of opportunities for interaction between performer, spectator, and passer-by.<sup>52</sup> The view that street theatre and the outdoor arts can attract a wider audience to the arts is shared by the Arts Council, who highlight the

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<sup>47</sup> Allan Kaprow, cited in Jeff Kelley, 'Common Work', in *Mapping the terrain: new genre public art*, ed. by S. Lacy (Seattle, WA.: Bay Press, 1995), pp. 139–48 (p. 145).

<sup>48</sup> Acconci in Nick Kaye, *Multi-Media: Video Installation Performance* (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 100.

<sup>49</sup> Kaye, *Multi-Media*, p. 100.

<sup>50</sup> Bim Mason, *Street Theatre and Other Outdoor Performance* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2007), p. 3.

<sup>51</sup> Arts Council England, 'New Landscapes : Outdoor Arts Development Plan 2008-2011' (Arts Council England, 2008), p. 7 <<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/newlandscapes08.pdf>>.

<sup>52</sup> Bim Mason, *Street Theatre and Other Outdoor Performance* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2007), p. 3.



“particular ability to engage, inform and entertain audiences that might not otherwise attend a theatre event”.<sup>53</sup> The Arts Council go on to describes how the outdoor arts link audiences to the landscape in ways that ‘cannot happen within buildings’, and that:

*“the qualities of the work, its aesthetics, and the nature of the participatory experience reflect the relationship with the environment in which the work is presented”.*<sup>54</sup>

One alternative explanation sometimes referred to is the financial freedom of working independently of a theatre building or institutional establishment.<sup>55</sup> However, the economic rationale behind this form of theatre or performance is far from straightforward. The nature of site-specific or outdoor performances means that the number of spectators is often limited by the conceptual or practical constraints of the piece. Site-specific work might be commissioned by the commercial sector, but this is most likely to happen within the structure of a festival programme. For most site-specific practitioners, some form of public funding is often required to support this type of ‘artistically developmental’ practice.<sup>56</sup> Inevitably, the relationship between artist, audience and commissioning institution is a complex and highly dependent on the situation and type of work being produced (an issue that will be returned to in the case study research). While there is undoubtedly a certain overlap between site-specific performance and street theatre, the wide-range of performers and entertainers covered by Bim Mason’s review and the Arts Council’s definition of the ‘outdoor arts’ makes it difficult to directly translate their claims to contemporary forms of site-specific practice. Fiona Wilkie’s more recent survey of companies and solo artists working in the field of site-specific performance provides a more reliable study of motivations, locations and forms of site-specific performance in the UK. Out of the 44 respondents, one of the key motivations for working out on site was a desire to reach a wider audience. One respondent described this motivation as aiming “to work particularly with and for people who do not normally have access to theatre for geographical, financial, or cultural reasons”.<sup>57</sup> Both Wilkie and Australian author Gay McAuley also note theatre’s strong connection to local, regional and rural communities, with Wilkie also finding that factors such as the lack of traditional auditoria were significant the development of site-specific performance culture (such as in Wales).<sup>58</sup>

Wilkie suggests that the desire of practitioners to widen participation and develop new audiences is evidence of the politics that underpins much of the site-specific practice in the UK. This was

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<sup>53</sup> Arts Council England, ‘New Landscapes : Outdoor Arts Development Plan 2008-2011’, p. 2.

<sup>54</sup> Arts Council England, ‘New Landscapes : Outdoor Arts Development Plan 2008-2011’.

<sup>55</sup> Carlson, *Places of Performance*, p. 207.

<sup>56</sup> Arts Council England, ‘New Landscapes : Outdoor Arts Development Plan 2008-2011’, p. 7.

<sup>57</sup> Wilkie, ‘Mapping the Terrain’, p. 151.

<sup>58</sup> Wilkie, p. 143.

indicated by almost half of Wilkie's respondents, with political motivations linked to working directly within local communities or rejecting the limitations and controls of traditional theatre spaces.<sup>59</sup> To explore these political motivations in more detail we might turn to theories of critical art practice, which have become increasingly intertwined with theories of performance, particularly in relation to site-specific work. In her 1998 collection of essays entitled 'Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics', critic Rosalyn Deutsche defines 'critical site-specific' practice as a turn away from the modernist art traditions of aesthetic autonomy and fixed, inherent meanings. This critique of modernist art is demonstrated by the deliberate admission of context, contingency and social processes into site-specific practice.<sup>60</sup> Returning to more recent writing on performance, the political motivations of site-specific practitioners are explored in Mike Pearson's 'provisional distinctions' between auditorium and site. As artistic director of the leading site-specific theatre company Brith Gof (alongside Clifford McLucas) Pearson has been immersed in site-specific practice and research for the past three decades. His characterisation of the auditorium as closed, safe, singular, scheduled, stable and bounded is contrasted to 'site', which is defined by its contingency, multiplicity, messiness, openness, and appropriation. Tim Etchells, author and director of the Sheffield-based group Forced Entertainment, also writes lucidly on the appeal of the city as 'contested space' - used at the same time by many individuals and groups whose interests 'do not by any means coincide'.<sup>61</sup> By addressing the population (diverse in class, race, gender, politics) who inhabit these layers as audience 'or at least a potential audience', Etchells is alluding to a number of important ideas (ethics, framing everyday life as performance) but particularly the appeal of performing amongst diverse urban community.<sup>62</sup>

Given Deutsche's assertion that site-specificity represents a critical response to modernist art, it is perhaps unsurprising to find a resemblance between Pearson's distinctions and the stylistic oppositions between modernity and postmodernity defined by Hassan and reproduced in David Harvey's 'The Condition of Postmodernity'.<sup>63</sup> Harvey goes to suggest that the collision or superimposition of different realities is a key characteristic of postmodern art.<sup>64</sup> In terms of site-specific practice, this description might be translated as the way in which performances are superimposed onto an existing social reality of the site. Other commentators and critics have also

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<sup>59</sup> Wilkie, 'Mapping the Terrain', p. 144.

<sup>60</sup> Deutsche, p. 61.

<sup>61</sup> Harvie and Etchells, p. xii.

<sup>62</sup> Harvie and Etchells.

<sup>63</sup> Hassan (1985) reproduced in David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 1990), p. 43.

<sup>64</sup> David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 1990), p. 50.

defined postmodern art and performance in terms of its openness, plurality, and a handing over of greater agency to the spectator to define their own experience.<sup>65</sup>

The third key motivation identified by Fiona Wilkie's 2002 study was aesthetic appeal of working on site. Writing from a background in scenography, Alison Oddey and Christine White describe the 'dramatic challenges' of site as having exciting potential, and opportunities for creativity that are not available in the traditional theatre, suggesting that "the skills of theatre actors / directors are provoked to envisage what is possible for the space".<sup>66</sup> Pearson and Shanks offer a definition of site-specific performance as "the latest action or occupation of a location at which other occupations (or at least their material traces and histories) are still apparent".<sup>67</sup> Taking this definition as a start-point, one might then work backwards to define 'site' as (a) 'location (or place) of past action or occupation that might be transformed through future actions or occupations (practices)'. This description, which also draws upon the archaeological understanding of 'site', evokes a strong connection between the conceptual processes involved in the production of site-specific performance and those within the fields of architecture or urbanism. The dialectical nature of site as a space evoking both past actions and future potentials is further explored by McAuley. She challenges geographer Edward Casey's attempt to contrast 'site' as empty and place as 'full' of associations and memories.<sup>68</sup> Like architects, McAuley argues that performance -makers always conceive 'sites' as a particular kind of place - one 'pregnant' with possibility or intentionality.

In order to develop a fuller definition of 'site' the concept of 'place' also requires some further exploration. A familiar characteristic of 'place' is the layering of discursive or symbolic meaning well beyond mere physical location or position.<sup>69</sup> This significance of these layers of meaning is an important and recurring theme in the literature on site-specific performance reviewed in this chapter. Geographers such as Edward Relph and his 'phenomenology of place' also expressed the idea that physical location was neither a necessary nor sufficient factor in place (or placelessness). This is one of several competing concepts of a 'sense of place', and describes the way in which an individual derives meaning from their immediate spatial context to identify themselves within a place.<sup>70</sup> Relph also challenged the view of space as a 'physical container' that held places, and

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<sup>65</sup> Douglas Crimp, 'The Photographic Activity of Postmodernism', *October*, 15 (1980), 91–101 (p. 91). McAuley, *Space in Performance*, p. 95.

<sup>66</sup> Alison Oddey and Christine A. White, 'Introduction : The Potentials of Space', in *The potentials of spaces: the theory and practice of scenography & performance* (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2006), p. 14.

<sup>67</sup> Pearson and Shanks, p. 23.

<sup>68</sup> Gay McAuley, 'Site-Specific Performance: Place, Memory and the Creative Agency of the Spectator', *Arts: The Journal of the Sydney University Arts Association*, 27 (2005), 27–51 (p. 35).

<sup>69</sup> Tim Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2004), p. 10.

<sup>70</sup> Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion, 1976), p. 45.

argued that an experiential-based understanding of place required an understanding of space in the same terms. This identification is closely linked to the importance of space in social relationships in the writing of Lefebvre and latterly Edward W. Soja and his trialectics of being - historicity (or temporality) spatiality and sociality.<sup>71</sup> It is also central to Marc Augé's definition of place as a space where social relationships are 'self-evident' - "we are understood by others and in turn understand".<sup>72</sup> Strongly influenced by the philosophy of Heidegger, Christian Norberg-Schulz was a key figure in introducing a phenomenological discourse into the field of architecture, and in his call to 'return to things', emphasised the significance of place and materiality. Norberg-Schulz rejected abstract or mathematical conceptions of space, arguing that landscapes should be understood as inhabited or lived places.<sup>73</sup> The process of qualitative investigation into the spirit of a place or 'genius loci' is viewed as fundamental to the development of architecture that is spatially and socially integrated into its context.<sup>74</sup> Juhani Pallasmaa, whose phenomenology of architecture was influenced by Merleau-Ponty, has argued that Heidegger's notion of dwelling 'directs architecture backwards', while David Harvey has interpreted it as a 'retreat' from modernity and the complexity of the city.<sup>75</sup> The complexity of place-identity in the contemporary city has been addressed more positively in the work of geographer Doreen Massey, who has described the 'throwntogetherness' of urban communities and the challenging nature of negotiating what (a) 'place' is or means in the here and now.<sup>76</sup>

Responding to a growing sense of placeless experiences in the contemporary city, authors such as McAuley and Lucy Lippard have appealed for site-located art to be not just site-specific but 'place-specific', incorporating human, economic, political and historical dimensions of a locality.<sup>77</sup> However this apparently compassionate shift towards greater sensitivity to place and local conditions has not gone completely unchallenged by critics. Harriet Hawkins raises the issue of a potential conflict for artists, where claims for local sensitivity and increased engagement with local issues and politics have to be weighed up against the risks of being judged as 'parochial', resulting in "limited audiences

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<sup>71</sup> Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1996), p. 71.

<sup>72</sup> Marc Augé, 'Non-Places', in *Architecturally Speaking: Practices of Art, Architecture and the Everyday*, ed. by Alan Read (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 10.

<sup>73</sup> Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Architecture : Meaning and Place : Selected Essays.*, Architectural Documents (New York: Electa/Rizzoli, 1988), pp. 44–45.

<sup>74</sup> Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci : Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1980), p. 10.

<sup>75</sup> Harvey in Cresswell, p. 60; Pallasmaa in M. Reza Shirazi, 'On Phenomenological Discourse in Architecture', *Environmental & Architectural Phenomenology Newsletter*, 23 (2012), 11–15.

<sup>76</sup> Doreen B Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage Publications, 2005), p. 140.

<sup>77</sup> Lucy R. Lippard, 'Notes from a Recent Arrival (1995)', in *Situation*, ed. by C. Doherty, Documents of Contemporary Art (London: Whitechapel, 2009), p. 157; McAuley, *Space in Performance*, p. 11.

and markets, hence influence and import".<sup>78</sup> In an even stronger critique, Kwon and Frampton warn of a regression towards nostalgic tendencies of local particularity.<sup>79</sup>

Marvin Carlson adopts semiotic theories to attempt to explain why site-specific performance makers are attracted to new sites or places for each production and argues that the existing meanings and associations of these places becomes an important part of the performance itself.<sup>80</sup> Alan Lane, Artistic Director of contemporary site-specific performers Slung Low, describes how the aesthetic attraction of site is in its authenticity: 'The real world is the best replica of the real world I know of... it looks like it, smells like it, touches like it'.<sup>81</sup> In other cases, the strong aesthetic appeal that these practitioners describe is intrinsically wrapped up with the socio-political aspects of site-specific performance. However, both Deutsche and McAuley identify other cases where the exclusive concentration on the aesthetic possibilities of the site as a physical setting risks 'fetishising' the site and imposing a potentially 'placeless' experience on the audience.<sup>82</sup>

This sub-section has introduced the idea of theatre and performance that takes place outside of the traditional auditorium - its roots in political activism, its relation to other forms of 'outdoor arts', and the emergence of 'site-specific' performance as a model of practice. The discussion identified a number of key motivations for contemporary practitioners, principally drawn from Fiona Wilkie's PhD research. These included widening audiences, escaping the financial or political control of traditional theatrical institutions, performance as political activism, and the aesthetic potential of site(s). The next section moves on to interrogate the question of specificity: What is the difference between performances that happen 'outdoors', in 'found space' and on 'site'? What does it mean to be 'specific'? And can a 'site-specific' performance be relocated?

## 2.4 Specificity: the art/site relationship

In these opening considerations of site-specificity, there has been a tendency to relate the concept of a site to a distinct physical location (a hotel room, a building, a city), which has then been reinforced by references to the unique specificity that linked the performance and site. Kwon has identified the emergence of these practices as part of a reaction against the market economy and commodification of art, with artists and performance-makers turning towards practices and forms

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<sup>78</sup> Harriet Hawkins, 'Geography and Art. An Expanding Field: Site, the Body and Practice', *Progress in Human Geography*, 2012, p. 7.

<sup>79</sup> Miwon Kwon, *One Place after Another : Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge, Mass. ; London: MIT Press, 2002), p. 159.

<sup>80</sup> Marvin Carlson, *Places of Performance: Semiotics of Theatre Architecture*, New edition (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 34.

<sup>81</sup> Research Interview with Alan Lane, Artistic Director of Slung Low, 2011.

<sup>82</sup> Deutsche, p. 61; McAuley, *Space in Performance*, p. 31.

that produced an 'inextricable, indivisible relationship between work and site'.<sup>83</sup> By creating work that could only be completed by the physical presence of the viewer, site-specific artists resisted the modernist aesthetic autonomy and indifference to site. In the case of public sculpture, this grounding of the artwork to the site was manifested as a literal fixing of the artwork to the site.

As previously highlighted, the origins of contemporary site-specific performance lie in the environmental performances of the 1960s and 70s, which aimed to reinvent modes of being in space and were strongly linked to protest, activism and radical politics. In the 1970s, performance emerged as a critical method of dematerialising the artwork, thus further resisting its commodification. Anti-visual techniques or live performance or events celebrated the artwork as process rather than object. Kwon neatly summarises this shift by declaring that:

*"the guarantee of a specific relationship between art work and site is not based on a physical permanence of that relationship... but rather on the recognition of its unfixed impermanence, to be experienced as an unrepeatable and fleeting situation".<sup>84</sup>*

Despite this apparent resistance to market forces, the recent explosion of interest in alternative theatre and site-specific performance is once again at risk of becoming largely subsumed into mass culture, with force of consumer market resulting in the widespread label (mis)use of the term 'site-specific'. While activist and 'socially-engaged' modes of practice persist, Kwon suggests that the proliferation of a range of similar terms (site-located, site-conscious, site-determined, site-responsive) is part of an effort by less politically-minded performance-makers and producers to distance themselves from the radical roots of site-specific performance.<sup>85</sup>

The growth in interest in theatre and performance outside of the auditorium has resulted in the label 'site-specific' being applied to an ever increasing number of performance and art practices. The subject matter, audience experience and critical intentions within this label vary dramatically - from the restaging Shakespeare in a forest, a guided coach tour, an endurance walk, an intimate play in a hotel room, or a solo 'first-person' adventure across a whole city.<sup>86</sup> Writing back in 2002, Miwon Kwon's highly influential book, 'One Place After Another: Site Specific Art and Locational Identity', opens with the argument that the term 'site-specific' is more problematic than useful and insufficient to describe a particular genre of art or theatre.<sup>87</sup> This is due to the political or activist

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<sup>83</sup> Kwon, *One Place after Another*, p. 11.

<sup>84</sup> Kwon, *One Place after Another*, p. 24.

<sup>85</sup> Kwon, *One Place after Another*, p. 1.

<sup>86</sup> See Appendix 1 for a further range of examples of 'site-specific' performance practice.

<sup>87</sup> Miwon Kwon, *One Place after Another*, p. 2.

origins of site-specific practice and its complex relationship with critical art theory and contemporary spatial politics.

Undeterred by this challenge, subsequent authors have attempted to classify the range of performance models, focusing on the different critical approaches employed. The first sees a return to the writing of Fiona Wilkie, who identifies five categories of theatrical performance on a sliding scale of site specificity, based the relationship between the performance and its chosen site (see Figure 2.2).

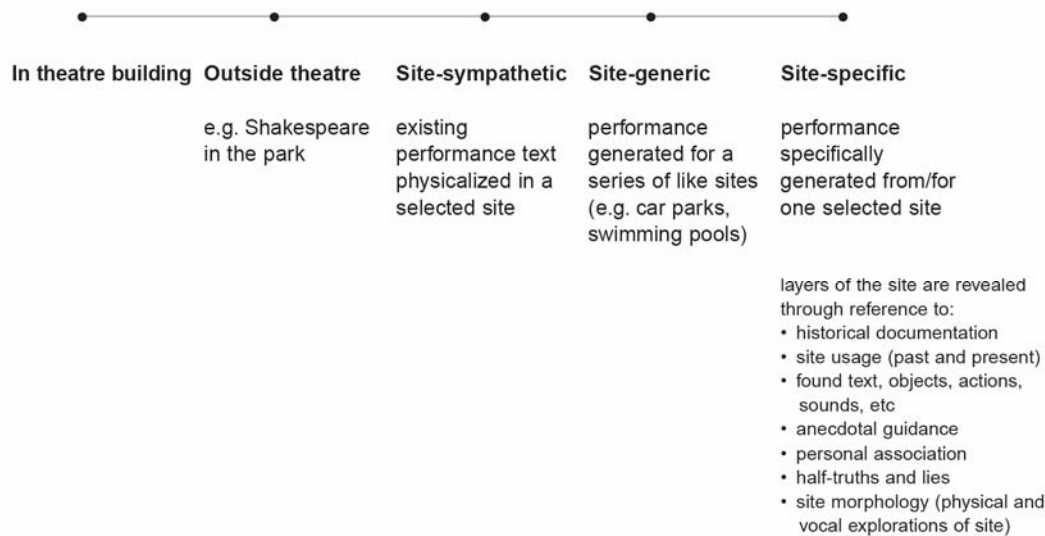


Figure 2.2. The relationship to site in different performance models. Image: Reproduced from Wilkie, 'Mapping the Terrain', p.150.

As an example commonly used to represent the antithesis of site specificity, Shakespeare in the park (or 'outside theatre') marks one the non-specific end of the spectrum. At the other end, site specific is defined as being 'generated from/for one selected site'. Despite its simplicity, Wilkie's definition of site-specificity is rarely adhered to by many of the theatre companies and marketing agencies advertising, with 'site-specific' instead used as a catch-all term to describe many other events staged outside of the context of a traditional theatre venue. This apparently simple statement 'generated from site' also belies a broad number of individual artistic approaches, political convictions, processes and practices. Instead of focusing on the performer's selection of a site, Gay McAuley

examines the creative processes that underpin this type of practice to produce a comparable list of three categories:<sup>88</sup>

- 'site-located': work whose relationship to site is purely formal or aesthetic
- 'site-based': work that emerges from engagement with a specific community, but may be transferred to a different site at a later stage
- 'site-specific': work emerges from a particular place and engages or resonates with the historical, political and social situation of that place

In both Wilkie's and McAuley's lists, performance works that are able to be transferred from the original site to somewhere else are clearly defined as something other than specific. Projects that occupy this middle-ground (which includes works that might be adapted for another site) are variably labelled with potentially confusing terms such as 'site-located', 'site-generic' or 'site-based'. Both reserve 'site-specific' for works that are integrated with the site on both a spatial and socio-political level. This reiterates the view of Mike Pearson, who describes site-specific performances as 'inseparable' from their site - "the only context within which they are readable".<sup>89</sup> As Paul Binson, Artistic Director of Boilerhouse suggests:

*"You can recreate a work in response to a number of differing sites, which is totally valid in itself and is an element of site-specificity but is different from making a piece of work in response to one specific site."*<sup>90</sup>

Despite this, half of practitioners responding to Fiona Wilkie's 'Mapping the Terrain' survey believed that a 'site-specific' performance could be transferred or modified for another site. This debate, though partly semantic, gets to the heart of clarifying the definition of site-specific practice as a 'pure' model of artistic practice - one that is commonly muddled by external pressures such as the need to market a performance and produce commercial revenue.

Unlike Wilkie, McAuley's definition of 'site-specific' excludes work that is produced 'for' site, focusing instead on work that is produced 'from' site. This difference opens up a further discussion around whether it is site or performance that comes first and whether either/or is fundamental to the definition of 'site-specific'. In response to this, some artists have used the phrase **'starting from site'** to distinguish between truly 'site-specific' and more 'superficial' forms of work that are

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<sup>88</sup> McAuley, 'Site-specific Performance', pp. 31–32.

<sup>89</sup> Pearson in Nick Kaye, *Art into Theatre: Performance Interviews and Documents* (Amsterdam: OPA, 1996), p. 211.

<sup>90</sup> Paul Binson, Artistic Director of Boilerhouse in Wilkie, 'Mapping the Terrain', p. 149.



informed by site.<sup>91</sup> Returning to Mike Pearson's definition, it might be that site-specific performances are both 'conceived for and conditioned by' the particular conditions of a site.<sup>92</sup> This chimes with the view of Rosalind Deutsche, whose definition of a 'critical site-specific' practice is one that requires a reciprocity between artwork and site, with each responsible for framing and reframing the other.<sup>93</sup> More recently, Pearson has expanded on his definition to suggest that:

*"the measure of site-specificity may be whether the authors of its written account are willing and able to devote equal attention to performance and to site: to extensive and detailed description of cultural and political context, architectural and topographic setting, history and ambiance".*<sup>94</sup>

These categorisations and definitions seem to share a tacit criticism of works that have a non-specific or generic relationship to site and begin to suggest that place and community as a fundamental aspects of site-specificity. This 'expanded definition' of site will be explored in greater detail in the later stages of this chapter. These criticisms link back to Kwon's argument that 'site-specific' has become thoughtlessly adopted as an automatic signifier for 'progressivity' or criticality, where in fact it often describes work with little political or critical currency.<sup>95</sup> McAuley even suggests that such site-located or site-generic work might inflict a 'placeless' experience, something more often associated with the mass culture and consumerist space of Auge's 'non-places'.<sup>96</sup>

## 2.5 The site-specific spectator-participant

As touched upon in the introduction to this chapter, the emergence of site-specific performance practice is, in part, linked back to a desire to take performance outdoors and away from the traditional formality, safety, and spatial hierarchy of the theatre auditorium. A shift away from formal (typically indoor) seating arrangements requires a whole new thinking and language to describe the dynamic spatial relationship between spectator and live performance on site. In more traditional models of performance (live actors watched by a live audience in a shared physical space), many of these spatial concerns are shared with those of street performers and entertainers. The range of outdoor audience arrangements (from one-to-one performance and busking, to walkabout shows, parades, and large-scale public spectacles) are summarised expertly by Bim

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<sup>91</sup> Hawkins, p. 7.

<sup>92</sup> Pearson and Shanks, p. 23; Kaye, *Art into Theatre*, p. 211.

<sup>93</sup> Deutsche, p. 61.

<sup>94</sup> Mike Pearson, *Site-Specific Performance* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 194.

<sup>95</sup> Kwon, *One Place after Another*, p. 1.

<sup>96</sup> McAuley, 'Site-Specific Performance', p. 31; Auge.

Mason's review.<sup>97</sup> Writing from the perspective of a practitioner, Mason describes the spatial configurations and restrictions of each model and the more general trade-off of proxemics, where any performance over a certain scale requires amplification and/or raised viewing position to preserve sightlines. However, this has knock-on effects on the subtlety and emotional depth of a performance, the cost and organisation required, as well as the opportunities for audience participation.<sup>98</sup>

McAuley has also described the process of constructing an audience from a group of individual spectators in open or outdoor performance situations. She describes the way in which the physical disposition of the space and the 'staging' - whether deliberate or incidental - sets in motion a transformation from individuals (spectators) to 'collectivity' (audience), and from passive bystanders to co-creators of the performance (participants).<sup>99</sup> This process is revealed further in a passage in Pearson & Shanks' 'Theatre/Archaeology'. They describe the way in which events create performance spaces - a crowd of people, even with no formal instructions, framing devices, or proscenium arch, can be transformed into an audience by the social action right in front of them. When such a social action (e.g. a fight, song, or dance) is instigated, a crowd of people will automatically withdraw to give space to the action. The crowd then adjusts itself to the best position to watch (a circular formation), which is both democratic (in view) and has the ability to expand or thicken to allow more people in.<sup>100</sup> McAuley and Mason both identify a careful social calculation carried out by individual spectators - positioning themselves just far enough away to avoid becoming part of the spectacle, but not too far as to restrict their view.<sup>101</sup> Just as quickly the action ends, the temporary performance space is enveloped by the crowd and there may no longer be any physical clues as to what has just happened.<sup>102</sup>

The shift out of the auditorium and onto site has happened alongside greater experimentation in theatre and performance-making, including experimental forms such as interactive and 'one-to-one' performances.<sup>103</sup> An emerging generation of artists are experimenting with digital and mobile technologies to create distinctive forms of performance that are experienced and interacted with in

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<sup>97</sup> Mason.

<sup>98</sup> Mason, pp. 87–166.

<sup>99</sup> McAuley, *Space in Performance*, p. 275.

<sup>100</sup> Pearson and Shanks, p. 21.

<sup>101</sup> McAuley, *Space in Performance*, p. 276; Mason, p. 95.

<sup>102</sup> Pearson and Shanks, p. 21.

<sup>103</sup> Rachel Zerihan, *One to One Performance*, Study Room Guide (London: Live Art Development Agency, 2009) <[http://www.thisisliveart.co.uk/uploads/documents/SRG\\_Zerihan\\_reducedsize.pdf](http://www.thisisliveart.co.uk/uploads/documents/SRG_Zerihan_reducedsize.pdf)> [accessed 17 March 2014].

virtual / online spaces as well as real urban sites.<sup>104</sup> These models deliberately challenge the role of the traditional spectator, inventing new modes of watching or experiencing performance. One practice that has pioneered the development of this type of interactive or 'mixed-reality' performance is the Brighton-based group, Blast Theory. Matt Adams, co-founder of Blast Theory, suggests that the appeal of working with technology (and mobile communication systems in particular) is their socially and politically transformative nature and the way that they open up new terrain in theatrical practice - 'dismantling' the relationship between audience, performer and urban space.<sup>105</sup> In this context, McAuley argues that traditional theatrical terms such as 'audience', 'witness' or 'spectator' are insufficient "when so much more than looking is being done and when all the senses are in play".<sup>106</sup> Instead, McAuley and others have proposed the use of the alternative term 'participants', who may act at different moments as spectators, performers, and co-creators of the performance, with a greater agency for making meaning through an active 'doing' well as well as viewing.<sup>107</sup> Keren Zaiontz describes the way in which site-specific spectator-participants perform a 'double-duty' - becoming co-creators of the performance or playing a more central role within the performance (as a 'delegated performer'), while also retaining a role as a witness or spectator.<sup>108</sup> Zaiontz goes on to suggest that the role of spectator-participants in co-creating a performance can support both the aesthetics and politics of a work.<sup>109</sup>

One of the most identifiable characteristics of the expanded definition of site is the shift in interest towards 'socially engaged' art practices, where artists and performance-makers take the social site and the local community as 'subject, material, and audience'.<sup>110</sup> While site-specific practitioners had previously reacted against institutional or commercial interests, this recent shift is more likely to be motivated by an aspiration of embracing the everyday and engaging a public beyond the elitist world of the gallery or theatre.<sup>111</sup> This shift in contemporary art practice described by Hawkins, Kwon, Deutsche and others, aligns with the motivations of site-specific performance-makers reflected in Fiona Wilkie's 2002 study. The invitation of audience members to participate and/or collaborate in the creation and interpretation of an artwork or performance is a central characteristic of the

<sup>104</sup> Steve Benford and Gabriella Giannachi, *Performing Mixed Reality* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2011).

<sup>105</sup> Maria Chatzichristodoulou, 'How to Kidnap Your Audiences: An Interview with Matt Adams from Blast Theory', in *Interfaces of performance*, ed. by Janis Jefferies and Rachel Zerihan (Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2009), p. 109.

<sup>106</sup> McAuley, 'Site-Specific Performance', p. 50.

<sup>107</sup> McAuley, *Space in Performance*, p. 276; Keren Zaiontz, 'Ambulatory Audiences and Animate Sites: Staging the Spectator in Site-Specific Performance', in *Performing Site-Specific Theatre: Politics, Place, Practice*, ed. by Joanne Tompkins and Anna Birch (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 167–81 (p. 167).

<sup>108</sup> Zaiontz, p. 168.

<sup>109</sup> Zaiontz, p. 168.

<sup>110</sup> Hawkins, p. 5.

<sup>111</sup> Kwon, *One Place after Another*, p. 24.

emerging 'genres' of relational, participatory or socially-engaged art. A detailed study of participatory performance (and site-specificity) is continued in chapter 4.

This discussion of the role of the participant in contemporary site-specific performance is, by necessity, far from comprehensive as it is particular to the performance being examined and, the subjective experience of the participant. In one sense, this is a consequence of the deliberately broad definition of performance employed in this thesis, which incorporates a range of dramaturgical, participatory, technological and ludic practices. It also relates to the nature of contemporary practice and the way in which performance-makers are constantly pushing the boundaries of the discipline and testing new methods of engaging participants within the work and the site. Rather than attempting a comprehensive analysis of participant roles at this point, this section concludes by proposing a set of questions drawn from the literature as well as my own first-hand experience of site-specific performances. These questions focus on the role of the participant on a case-by-case basis and might be addressed to potential performance-makers as well as those analysing site-specific performance practice:

- How do potential participants encounter a performance? *As an incidental passer-by, as a dedicated theatre-goer, as a curious tourist, or as local resident intrigued by the idea watching live performance in an unexpected urban setting.* Do individual participants have prior knowledge of the site or are they visiting for the first time?
- How is the performance marketed to potential participants - are they told what to expect? Are tickets required, and if so, where are they sold? How much does it cost to participate?
- Where do participants congregate before the performance begins - are tickets checked? Do participants need instructions – or setting up with any specialist equipment?
- How does each individual interact with the performance? *As a passenger on a bus or boat, as a pedestrian or cyclist, via headphones or other personal / mobile technology, as an individual, a pair, or part of a group of strangers.*
- Do the live performers (if present) interact directly with the participant? Are participants acting as delegated performers? Is any of this witnessed by others (passers-by) not directly involved in the performance?

- How long does the experience last and how does the participant (or participants) know when it is over?

## 2.6 Site-specific performance: meaning-making

In the wake of postmodernist theories, the notion of an 'audience' as a stable entity (and artworks having one fixed meaning) has been all but dismantled. Instead, the term 'audience' might be thought of as referring to a collective of individuals, each with their own process of meaning-making. The way this process happens is highly dependent on each individual's prior associations, experiences, education, and cultural background, along with many other factors. As Barker suggests, being (or becoming) part of an audience is not a confined process. It is one that begins before the actual encounter, as people gather knowledge about the event and build expectations, as well as bringing their social and personal histories with them.<sup>112</sup> Despite this, performance research that seeks to understand the meaning-making process still commonly relies on identifying patterns and processes within this multiplicity, which in turn, binds this multiplicity of individual responses to a performance into a 'researchable community of response'.<sup>113</sup>

The experience of attending a site-specific performance as a participant often has much in common with watching more orthodox forms of theatre. Indeed, site-specific performances are often programmed or commissioned as part of a wider performing arts festival, where events sit alongside other forms of live art and popular entertainment. Depending on the scale and form of the performance, many of the participants might be attending as a social activity or 'good night out'.<sup>114</sup> However, the nature of site-specific works tend towards smaller number of participants and more inaccessible locations. Because of this, a significant proportion of participants may also be critics, academics, or associates of the artists, which may place a different impetus on the awareness of the representational process and interpretation of a work.

The social experience of each participant immediately before and after a performance also impacts on the way that the event will be interpreted and understood. This social reality (a common example is the milling in the foyer before a performance commences) is only one of several levels of 'awareness' (or realities) identified by McAuley and other critics in relation to performance events.<sup>115</sup> Watching or participating in performance may involve a temporary transition to another

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<sup>112</sup> M. Barker, 'I Have Seen the Future and It Is Not Here Yet...; Or, on Being Ambitious for Audience Research', *The Communication Review*, 9 (2006), 123–41 (p. 124).

<sup>113</sup> Barker, p. 124.

<sup>114</sup> John McGrath, *A Good Night out: Popular Theatre : Audience, Class, and Form* (London: Nick Hern Books, 1996).

<sup>115</sup> McAuley, *Space in Performance*, pp. 25–27.

awareness level (a suspension of belief) that can be easily broken. In site-specific performance this process might be thought of as even more precarious, as it involves the spectator-participant being removed, to some extent, from a familiar environment and transported (metaphorically or literally) to an unfamiliar environment by the performance.

For Pearson and Shanks, the meaning-making process is bound up in a three-way relationship between the participants (including the 'watchers' and the 'watched'), the work, and the site. The act of performing 'recontextualises' the site of performance - the narrative of the site and the narrative of the performance 'jostle' to create meanings for both the immediate audience and the wider public. Multiple meanings and reading of performance and site intermingle, 'amending and compromising each other'.<sup>116</sup> Alternative views on this 'recontextualisation' have been offered by Tim Etchells of Forced Entertainment, who describes the creative process for the 2000 performance 'Nights in this City' as vandalising or 'writing over' the urban fabric.<sup>117</sup> For other site-specific practitioners, the main aim is not to 'write over' unknown sites in this way, but to construct a narrative that draws upon prior experiences and memories of the site. Of course, any efforts to do this will always be partial, contingent and highly subjective, as it is simply not possible to encompass the breadth of prior knowledge, associations and memories of the site (or of other similar sites) that individual participants might bring. Pearson has alternatively conceived this relationship as that of 'host' (site) and the work as 'ghost' (performance).<sup>118</sup> This notion of 'host' and 'ghost' has since been adapted by others such as Daniel Wetzel of Rimini Protokoll, who describes their work in terms of a 'parasitic' relationship with the host site.<sup>119</sup> This raises further questions of how a parasitic performance might relate to its site - whether the relationship is one where the host becomes 'infected' or one where the host gains something back in return.

Victoria Hunter has described how the trace or imprint left by a site-specific performance continues to intertwine with the memory of the place after the performance has finished. For participants new to a site, site-specific performances can engender a strange familiarity with an unfamiliar place, imprinting the site 'onto the participants' own personal map of the city'.<sup>120</sup> A similar idea is also central to Kathleen Irwin's view of sites of performance as 'heterotopic'.<sup>121</sup> Meanwhile, those already familiar with the site may experience a type of contamination, with familiar spaces taking on

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<sup>116</sup> Pearson and Shanks, p. 23.

<sup>117</sup> Tim Etchells, *Certain Fragments* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 81.

<sup>118</sup> Pearson in Kaye, *Art into Theatre*, p. 209.

<sup>119</sup> Daniel Wetzel, 'Performance in Contemporary Urban Contexts' (presented at the Place, Possibility, Performance, University of Leeds, 2014).

<sup>120</sup> Victoria Hunter, 'Do You Come Here Often? Mapping Urban Space through Embodied Encounters' (presented at the Place, Possibility, Performance, University of Leeds, 2014).

<sup>121</sup> Irwin, p. 39.

new meanings - potentially positive or not and overlaid with emotional or political significance. The effect of this type of site-specific intervention is not so much a 'redrawing' but a 'palimpsest' - a trace that becomes layered over previous traces, slowly (re)shaping personal and social place-identities.<sup>122</sup> This can result in an unpredictable meaning-making process, where the prior relationship between participant and site can disrupt or magnify the artistic intentions of the performance-maker.<sup>123</sup> Gay McAuley suggests that the meaning-making process in site-specific performance is 'open and volatile' and the way that performance reframes the relationship between participant and site demands particular attention.<sup>124</sup> For Kaye, the profusion of signs and spaces in the urban landscape already offers an 'excess' of meaning – with site-specific performances potentially offering a lens for interpreting the complexity of the city.<sup>125</sup>

One of most significant contributions to this discussion is made by Nick Kaye in his 2000 book 'Site-specific art'. Here Kaye continues to unpick the performance-site relationship by arguing that the more directly a work interacts with a site, the more elusive and complex the borders and limits of the specificity prove to be.<sup>126</sup> Kaye refers to examples of practice including the projection artist Krzysztof Wodiczko to demonstrate the way a site-specific practice functions to articulate the disjunction between the reading of (ideal) space and the experience of (real) space. Kaye is one of several authors who have drawn upon the writing of architect Bernard Tschumi to explore the disjuncture between the concept of (ideal) space and experience of (real) space, suggesting that this theorisation of architectural space is fundamental in explaining how site-specific performances function in relation to their site. Tschumi's central principle is that architecture consists of these two terms or theories of space (the real and the ideal) that are interdependent but mutually exclusive.<sup>127</sup> Tschumi illustrates this point by making reference to post-structuralist theory, whereby architecture is conceived as a process of signification - of defining space or 'making space distinct'.<sup>128</sup> This immediately sets up a rupture or opposition between architecture's referent (space as lived and experienced) and its sign system (space as conceived, drawn and built). Tschumi describes this as the "impossibility of questioning the nature of space and at the same time making or experiencing (a) real space" - although the paradox of architectural practice is that these two activities remain

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<sup>122</sup> Kaye, *Site-Specific Art*, p. 11; Kathleen Irwin, 'The Ambit of Performativity: How Site Makes Meaning in Site-Specific Performance', in *Performance design*, ed. by Dorita Hannah and Olav Harsløf (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2008), pp. 39–61 (p. 46); *Temporary Urban Spaces: Concepts for the Use of City Spaces*, ed. by Florian Haydn and Robert Temel (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2006), p. 60.

<sup>123</sup> McAuley, 'Site-Specific Performance', pp. 48–49.

<sup>124</sup> McAuley, 'Site-Specific Performance'.

<sup>125</sup> Kaye, p. 41.

<sup>126</sup> Kaye, *Site-Specific Art*, p. 215.

<sup>127</sup> Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, p. 48.

<sup>128</sup> Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, p. 30.

inseparably bound.<sup>129</sup> Tschumi's use of structural linguistics to build architectural theory explicitly draws upon Derrida, with Kaye arguing that the concept of disjunction can only be understood in this context. We might therefore conceive of architecture's definition of space being always in deferral (between real and ideal) and therefore equivalent to the restlessness of Derrida's *différance*.<sup>130</sup> In his suggestion that 'an architectural element only functions by colliding with a programmatic element', Tschumi lays the ground for his often quoted phrase 'there is no architecture without action or without programme'.<sup>131</sup>

Kaye argues that site-specific practices arise in the same terms - they occur in a working over or 'upsetting' of the relationship between real and ideal space.<sup>132</sup> Like Tschumi's definition of architecture, this intimately ties site-specificity to the notion of event and performance:

*"In blurring the distinctions between the virtual space of a work (or theatrical suspension of belief) and the real spaces in which the view acts, these (site-specific) strategies expose the performance of places into which they intervene".<sup>133</sup>*

To test the dynamic relationship between space and activity, Tschumi proposed hypothetical programmes and projected them onto autonomous spatial architectures in order to determine whether the relationship was one of indifference, reciprocity or conflict.<sup>134</sup> Pearson and Shanks suggest that in this context Tschumi's term 'programme' is akin to scenario - and that site specific performance itself might be used to express the multiple articulations of event and space which Tschumi envisaged.<sup>135</sup> Meanwhile, Kaye concludes by suggesting that site-specific performance persistently works in opposition to the real experience of the site as it is always only speculating on the performance of its places.<sup>136</sup>

Finally, Laura Levin's criticism builds upon Kaye's reading of 'Nights in this City' but attempts to draw in some of the phenomenological perspectives of the Richard Schechner and Allan Kaprow. Levin argues that a purely post-structural reading of performance promotes the idea that meaning can only emerge from the subject - returning the spectator-subject (or participant-subject) to the

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<sup>129</sup> Bernard Tschumi, *Questions of Space : Lectures on Architecture*, Architectural Association, text 5 (London: Architectural Association, 1990), p. 27.

<sup>130</sup> Kaye, *Site-Specific Art*, pp. 45–46.

<sup>131</sup> Bernard Tschumi, *Event-Cities (Praxis)* (Cambridge, Mass. ; London: MIT Press, 1994), p. 11.

<sup>132</sup> Kaye, *Site-Specific Art*, p. 46.

<sup>133</sup> Kaye, *Site-Specific Art*, p. 41.

<sup>134</sup> Tschumi, *Questions of Space*, pp. 100–103.

<sup>135</sup> Pearson and Shanks, p. 24.

<sup>136</sup> Kaye, *Site-Specific Art*, p. 220.



position of Cartesian mastery in relation to the world.<sup>137</sup> Incorporating a phenomenological approach within performance theory and practice recognises that the environment has existence independent of our apprehension, 'letting the space have its say'.<sup>138</sup> This approach combines, as Levin admits, two 'seemingly opposing' epistemologies, but helps to explore the moments of sensory or haptic perceptions in a performance that cannot be explained through language alone, such as the smell of car tyres or vibrations of a passing train.<sup>139</sup> Levin goes on to use Benjamin's concept of the 'optical unconscious' to describe the aspects of the environment that 'we habitually engage with but routinely overlook'. While Benjamin was talking about photography, the same ideas can be used to understand the exhilaration of site-specific performance - the unplanned interruption of the environment into the performance frame 'when the ephemera of daily life cannot help but collide with the planned event'.<sup>140</sup> These moments of 'environmental unconscious' remind us that we are not authors of the world in the way that Etchells described the 'Cartesian-like writing over the city'. Site specific performance therefore functions by shifting the position of its participants in relation to the 'frame' and embracing the moments when spectators are not in control of the meaning or picture – when McAuley's three levels of awareness (the social reality, the presentational, and the fictional) are transgressed.<sup>141</sup> When spectator-participants are often not certain what is inside and what is outside the performance they find themselves with a heightened sense of receptivity or immersion.<sup>142</sup> It is this 'environmental unconsciousness' that Allan Kaprow took advantage of to 'show us, as if for the first time, the world we have always had about us but ignored'.<sup>143</sup>

## 2.7 Spatial dramaturgies and event-structures

The focus of the chapter up to this point has been to introduce the key concepts and terms relating to site-specific performance using literature drawn predominantly from the field of performance studies. These concluding sections now turn to some of the critical efforts to draw together site-specific performance and architecture.

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<sup>137</sup> Laura Levin, 'Can the City Speak? Site-Specific Art After Post-Structuralism', in *Performance and the City*, ed. by D. J. Hopkins, S. Orr, and K. Solga (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 240–57 (p. 249).

<sup>138</sup> Schechner in Emma Govan, Helen Nicholson and Katie Normington, *Making a Performance: Devising Histories and Contemporary Practices* (Routledge, 2007), p. 108.

<sup>139</sup> Levin, p. 250.

<sup>140</sup> Levin, p. 250.

<sup>141</sup> McAuley, *Space in Performance*, p. 252.

<sup>142</sup> Bruce Barton and Richard Windeyer, 'Immersive Negotiations: Binural Perspectives on Site-Specific Sound', in *Performing Site-Specific Theatre: Politics, Place, Practice*, ed. by Joanne Tompkins and Anna Birch (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 182–200 (p. 182).

<sup>143</sup> Kaprow, p. 9.

At a basic level, dramaturgy is an important concept to describe the structuring of performance as a 'stratigraphy of layers' - text, physical action/movement, music/sound, scenography and architecture.<sup>144</sup> While dramaturgy has been traditionally understood as the art of composing the elements of a drama on a stage, live art and site-specific performance practices have sparked a need for a broader understanding of the term. However, Turner proposes a widened definition of 'dramaturgy' not just as a pragmatic tool but as a way of describing the act of composition or structuring of events, actions, interactions, performances and contexts. Turner has suggested that, in the light of site-specific and other contemporary models of performance, 'dramaturgy' also needs encompass open-ended time structures, 'multiple narratives, frames and forms of textuality', along with a wider conception of site and situation.<sup>145</sup> One example is the shift from models of performance that inhabit a place towards those that move through spaces.<sup>146</sup> In this type of walking or other 'peripatetic' work (using vehicles or bicycles), participants must be encouraged to move by the performers or other means, which can pose both creative, logistical, and dramaturgical challenges.<sup>147</sup>

This expanded notion of dramaturgy is both 'critically creative' and always in flux – a process that attempts to create and articulate and reveal latent relationships (or disjunctions) between a work and its site.<sup>148</sup> This definition builds on the cross-cutting contributions of architectural and spatial theorists, including Tschumi's event-structures, Rendell's notion of understanding the urban fabric as 'spatial stories' and Massey's conception of space as a 'simultaneity of stories-so-far'.<sup>149</sup> Tschumi's contribution has been particularly important in opening up a discussion of the lived and temporal dimensions of architecture, whereby architecture (as event) is a product of both spatial configuration and the movement of bodies within space.<sup>150</sup> Turner goes further still, suggesting that the expanded concept of dramaturgy might be used to describe both the architectural characteristics of site-specific performance as well being a tool to understand the time-based, narrative and lived dimensions of architecture.<sup>151</sup> This chimes with authors such as Allen, who has also called for architecture to embrace notation techniques from performance (the score, the script, and perhaps 'dramaturgy') that can engage with time, change and the multiple/ complex

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<sup>144</sup> Pearson and Shanks, p. 24.

<sup>145</sup> Turner, pp. 150–151; Liesbeth Groot Nibbelink, 'You Are Here: Capturing Mobility in Contemporary Performance' (presented at the FIRT/IFTR Re-Routing Performance, Barcelona, 2013).

<sup>146</sup> Fiona Wilkie, 'The Production of "Site": Site-Specific Theatre', in *A Concise Companion to Contemporary British and Irish Drama*, ed. by Nadine Holdsworth and Mary Luckhurst (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), pp. 85–106 (p. 90).

<sup>147</sup> Mason, p. 145.

<sup>148</sup> Turner, p. 152.

<sup>149</sup> Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*; Rendell, *Art and Architecture*, p. 188; Massey, p. 9.

<sup>150</sup> Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, p. 256.

<sup>151</sup> Turner, pp. 152–153.

programmes and activities of the contemporary city.<sup>152</sup> Engaging with dramaturgical time-structures requires those involved in producing the built environment to relinquish a significant degree of control and become more open to interpretation, fluidity, and future change. This shift not only requires architects and urbanists to rethink existing design practices, but demands new tools and methods for engaging with the layers of complexity in urban sites.

## 2.8 Site-specificity and performance documentation

Kaye suggests that documentation has a particular place in site-specific performance because it “explicitly presents itself in the absence of its object” (the site).<sup>153</sup> This is not as simple as the presence of the site within the site-specific works versus its absence in the documentation, but just as documentation embodies the absence of site and event, the site-specific performance event recalls its own fleeting nature (between anticipation and memory) and built-in absences.<sup>154</sup>

While the relationship between site-specific practice and the documentation (or ‘mapping’) of the event may have particular resonance for Kaye, the question of what it means to document or ‘capture’ live performances is a recurring issue across performance practice and research. One common position is held by critics such as Thomas, who argues that the object of performance documentation can never be to ‘capture’ or even to speculate on the original meaning, ‘as the original meaning no longer exists in the present - but will have been ‘fragmented and experienced in many different ways’.<sup>155</sup> This notion of live performance as irretrievable is often traced back to Benjamin’s assertions around the ‘aura’ of the performer being tied to their presence - the actor’s unique occupation of time and space. When live audience is substituted for camera and recording, the aura that envelops the actor vanishes. Even the most perfect reproduction is lacking in one element - its unique presence in time and space.<sup>156</sup> Benjamin goes on to make a further (and perhaps more contentious) assertion - arguing that the recording or reproduction actually depreciates the ‘quality’ of the original’s live presence.<sup>157</sup> Etchells makes a similarly strong case against the documentation of live performance, characterising attempts to capture live performance as a “dragging down of the ephemeral into the fossilising mud of all that is fixed and fixing”.<sup>158</sup> For

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<sup>152</sup> Stan Allen, ‘Mapping the Unmappable’, in *Practice: architecture, technique + representation*, Expanded 2nd Ed (Abingdon, Oxon.: Routledge, 2008), pp. 49–50.

<sup>153</sup> Kaye, *Site-Specific Art*, p. 218.

<sup>154</sup> Kaye, *Site-Specific Art*, pp. 217–218.

<sup>155</sup> Mike Pearson and Julian Thomas, ‘Theatre/Archaeology’, *TDR (1988-)*, 38 (1994), 133–61 (p. 143).

<sup>156</sup> Walter Benjamin, ‘The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction’, in *Illuminations*, *Trans. by Harry Zohn (ori, ed. by Hannah Arendt* (London: Fontana, 1992).

<sup>157</sup> Benjamin in Philip Auslander, *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 39.

<sup>158</sup> Tim Etchells, *Certain Fragments* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 71.

Peggy Phelan, documentation is very much something other than performance, but is part of a wider pressure to 'succumb' to the contemporary media-driven economy.<sup>159</sup> Moreover, in giving way to documents (and subsequent academic analysis) artists are losing control of their work. Despite these pressures, Phelan argues that the nature of live performance continues to question or challenge this economy.<sup>160</sup> These views of documentation are challenged by authors such as Auslander and his writing on 'liveness'.<sup>161</sup> Auslander argues that performance documentation can be enjoyed independently (and more widely) than the audience who witnessed the original live event.<sup>162</sup> A popular example of this are the cinema broadcasts of live theatre performances that are now commonplace in the UK and beyond. Others such as Kester have highlighted the important pedagogical role that documentation plays in site-specific performance and other ephemeral forms of art practice. Documentation, he argues, is vital if new practitioners are to avoid the risks of 'reinventing the wheel' each time they engage with a site.<sup>163</sup>

A further theoretical challenge is the ongoing debate regarding the role of the documenter (or researcher) in 're-authoring' of the live(d) experience through the production of the performance document. Throughout his research and practice as part of Brith Gof, Pearson has emphasised the complexity of the live event and the constraints of the documentary form by inviting spectator-participants to participate in the documentation process.<sup>164</sup> The cross-cutting writing of Pearson and Shanks has also been influential on the significant challenge of theorising a methodology for the documentation of live performance, suggesting that events survive as a 'cluster of narratives'.<sup>165</sup> Pearson and Shanks propose a performance document created using methodologies from archaeology, forensics, the natural sciences, and cartography – a form of documentation that consists of 'assemblage and fragments' rather than (fruitlessly) attempting to capture a complete picture. This approach to documentation is therefore defined 'objects of retrieval', which may include traces of the site, dynamic patterns, structures, stories, and details from the performance.<sup>166</sup>

In exploring the complex relationship between performance (as event or ephemeral inhabitation of the site) and the document (the map or other representation of site and event), Kaye returns to the writing of Tschumi on architecture and representation. Tschumi's writing upset the supposedly

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<sup>159</sup> Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (Routledge, 1993), p. 146.

<sup>160</sup> Phelan, p. 146.

<sup>161</sup> Auslander, *Liveness*.

<sup>162</sup> Philip Auslander, 'The Performativity of Performance Documentation', *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art*, 28 (2011), 1–10 (p. 9).

<sup>163</sup> Grant H. Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art* (Berkeley, CA; London: University of California Press, 2004), pp. 190–191.

<sup>164</sup> Kaye, *Site-Specific Art*, p. 216.

<sup>165</sup> Pearson and Shanks, p. 57.

<sup>166</sup> Pearson and Shanks, p. 58.

stable relationship between notation (the plan, score, or script) and realisation (the building) by talking of sites whose meaning is always subject to performance, and yet to be defined.<sup>167</sup> These discussions begin to approach the heart of the connection between theories of site-specific performance and architecture and will be explored in greater detail in chapter 3.

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<sup>167</sup> Kaye, *Site-Specific Art*, p. 218.



### 3 Mapping-by-performing / performing-as-mapping: walks, tours and other 'more-than-representational' cartographies

*"No city can be mapped except by the body".<sup>1</sup>*

#### 1.0 Introduction

In tracing the origins of site-specific performance, chapter 2 began to suggest ways in which performances might be considered as a means of responding to and re-interpreting the urban site. Building on the concept of 'site-specificity' in performance, chapter 3 develops and strengthens the theoretical links between site-specific performance and other spatial practices through an examination of theories and practices of critical cartography.

Practices of surveying - knowing, and representing the world around us - have existed throughout human civilisation. As Katherine Harmon suggests in the introduction to her anthology of imaginary cartography, the urge to create maps of our world is perhaps part of what makes us human.<sup>2</sup> Across the history of mapping, a diverse range of methods, tools and representations have been employed, producing 'maps' that often operate, look, and feel very different to modern cartography. Despite this, the history of cartography as 'map-making' tends to be dominated by Western cartographic representations, scientific progression, and technological advances. Mapping has become synonymous with the pursuit of ever greater objective accuracy and detail in the way that we represent the world around us. In recent years, this process has been accelerated by advances in digital, online and mobile technologies. Geographical Information Systems (GIS), which were previously controlled by specialist cartographers or researchers, are now a ubiquitous part of everyday urban life. The lifting of restrictions of Global Positioning Systems (GPS) has led to this military technology being used to support a wide range of computing and communication functions, and GPS 'location-based' capabilities can now be found in many consumer Smartphones and satellite navigation systems ('sat navs'). Meanwhile, companies such as Google have developed publicly accessible cartographic data at levels of detail that would have been previously unimaginable. Many authors and critics have attempted to describe how our rapidly evolving relationship with mapping technologies might be changing the way that we understand, perform and produce urban space. This chapter places these location-based media and digital mapping developments within the wider

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen Barber, *The Vanishing Map* (Oxford; New York: Berg, 2006).

<sup>2</sup> Katharine Harmon, *You Are Here: Personal Geographies and Other Maps of The imagination* (New York: Princeton Architectural, 2004), p. 10.

context of what has been referred to as 'performative' or 'embodied' cartographies.<sup>3</sup> Drawing upon the interdisciplinary writing of geographers such as David Pinder, Doreen Massey, Harriet Hawkins, James Perkins, and Karen O'Rourke, the chapter explores the myriad ways in which artists and critical theorists have challenged traditional Cartesian thinking and proposed alternatives conceptions of what a 'map' of the city might be.

### 3.1 Cartographic Theories

#### 3.1.1 The agency of mapping

Despite huge advances in accessibility, maps continue to be used as tools of control. Employed by the agencies of government, urban planning and regeneration, maps are employed to design, manage, plan and regulate built environments. In this context, the map carries an (generally) undisputed weight of truth and authority. This status is carried over into the fields of architecture, urban planning and regeneration, where the map denotes land ownership, development zones and other legal-spatial frameworks. Outside the professional realms of urban planning and management, the authoritative and 'fixed' status of the map has come under greater scrutiny. This interest has developed out of new perspectives in a range of academic fields, alongside emerging artistic, performance and technological practices. Maps are also now embedded into life in the developed world in far more ways than was previously possible and a whole range of everyday activities now involve some contact with cartographic representation. From painstakingly hand-crafted recreation of geological or transit maps to location-based social networking and Google Street View, our relationship with mapping as both representation and practice has never been more complex. This increasing complexity has seen mapping permeate many academic fields beyond geography, with recent developments in particular spilling over into sociology, environmental psychology, and human-computing interaction. Given the rapid and widespread developments in the practice of mapping in the latter part of 20<sup>th</sup> century and into the 21<sup>st</sup>, it is perhaps surprising that field of 'critical cartography' only emerged relatively recently, over the last 25 years or so. Most prominent in initiating and developing a critical discourse on mapping are the contributions of post-modern geographers Denis Wood, Edward Soja, David Harvey and J.B. Harley, with Harley in particular noted for his criticism of the 'unquestionably scientific or objective' nature of cartography as a form of knowledge creation.<sup>4</sup> In his influential essay 'Deconstructing the Map', Harley has called for critics to embrace the intertextual nature of map reading, to challenge the epistemological myth of scientific

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<sup>3</sup> Perkins.

<sup>4</sup> J. B Harley, 'Deconstructing the Map', *Cartographica: The International Journal for Geographic Information and Geovisualization*, 26 (1989), 1–20 (p. 1).



cartography as an objective representation of reality, and to remain vigilant of the hegemonic and subjective nature of mapping:

*“Maps are authoritarian images. Without our being aware of it maps can reinforce and legitimate the status quo. Sometimes agents of change, they can equally become conservative documents. But in either case the map is never neutral”.<sup>5</sup>*

It is also important here to once again acknowledge the influential role of Henri Lefebvre in opening up the debate on the complexity and politics implicit in the production of space. Lefebvre and those who have followed him (Soja, Harvey, Healey, Tschumi, and Till amongst many others) have been highly critical of the reductionist approaches to mapping within urban planning - particularly the attempts to fix and rationalise the city as a series of formal elements or ‘container’ for social action. These modernist abstractions of space, which attempt to divorce space from its social and temporal dimensions and establish rules or relations between people and objects, is bound to fail ‘sooner or later’, argues Lefebvre, because of the inherent conflict in attempting to abstract the complexities of social relations as lived.<sup>6</sup>

These challenges to the hegemony of the map marked the awakening of a critical concern within the field of cartography, which has since influenced and informed debates in human geography and the wider social sciences. As part of these developments, mapping has been rethought as an interdisciplinary field of inquiry, open to relational concerns of context and practice with a reciprocal shift away from representation.<sup>7</sup> The growing concern with the processual and relational nature of map-making and map-use (sometimes referred to in relation to the wider ‘practice turn’) conceptualises ‘mapping’ as a whole range of interrelated practices – each located in cultural context and concerned with both human action and emotional ‘affect’. This approach acknowledges and theorises the activities, relations and agencies bound up in the processes of production (surveys, processing, drafting, editing, revising, updating, copying, and digitizing) and use of maps (purchase, storage, sharing, folding, rolling, conversion, and re-use).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Harley, p. 14.

<sup>6</sup> Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 41.

<sup>7</sup> Perkins, pp. 1–2.

<sup>8</sup> R. Kitchin, C. Perkins and M. Dodge, ‘Thinking about Maps’, in *Rethinking Maps: New Frontiers in Cartographic Theory* (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 16–17.

### 3.1.2 The map as a site for the production of space

*“A map has multiple entryways, as opposed to the tracing, which always comes back ‘to the same.’ The map has to do with performance, whereas the tracing always involves an alleged ‘competence’”.*<sup>9</sup>

In his influential chapter on agency and mapping, James Corner draws upon the writing of Deleuze and Guattari to describe the potential role of the map beyond a graphical representation or ‘tracing’ of the surface of the world.<sup>10</sup> According to Corner, the potency of the map is in the way it can act as a site or ‘working table’, upon which disparate elements (both real and virtual, seen and unseen) can be gathered and then shown.<sup>11</sup> It is in this double operation of gathering and showing that previously hidden connections or unimagined realities can emerge. This is the propositional potential of the map as a process that, when used to its full potential, can explore and unfold the complex and dynamic social and environmental forces in the existing milieu of the site.<sup>12</sup>

In relating these ideas to late 20<sup>th</sup> century thinking in urbanism, Corner draws upon critiques of so-called ‘top down’ planning by Lefebvre and Harvey, arguing that the fixed spatial arrangement of the Modern masterplan has fundamentally failed to embrace the complexity and fluidity of the city.<sup>13</sup> Similar arguments can be found in the writing of critics such as Allen, Graham and Healey, Vesely, and Till in relation to masterplans and other architectural representations.<sup>14</sup> Till also draws upon Lefebvre to argue that traditional ‘frozen’ methods of architectural representation not only deny the temporal conditions of real life, but operate as a means of establishing and maintaining professional authority.<sup>15</sup> Yet in focusing on the ‘entrenched’ methods of quantitative data and scientific ‘expert-produced’ maps, urban planning and architecture have failed to understand (or exploit) the potential of ‘mapping’ as an open-ended tool for enabling action.<sup>16</sup> Allen also hints at a more open-ended and

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<sup>9</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus : Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by Brian Massumi (London: Athlone Press, 1988), pp. 12–13.

<sup>10</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, p. 13.

<sup>11</sup> Corner, p. 225.

<sup>12</sup> Corner, p. 225.

<sup>13</sup> Corner, p. 251.

<sup>14</sup> Stan Allen, ‘Mapping the Unmappable’, in *Practice: architecture, technique + representation*, Expanded 2nd Ed (Abingdon, Oxon.: Routledge, 2008), p. 49; Jeremy Till, *Architecture Depends* (Cambridge, Mass. ; London: MIT Press, 2009); Dalibor Vesely, *Architecture in the Age of Divided Representation : The Question of Creativity in the Shadow of Production* (Cambridge, Mass; London: MIT, 2004); Stephen Graham and Patsy Healey, ‘Relational Concepts of Space and Place: Issues for Planning Theory and Practice’, *European Planning Studies*, 7 (1999), 623–46.

<sup>15</sup> Till, *Architecture Depends*, p. 113.

<sup>16</sup> Corner, p. 228.

anticipatory approach to cartography in his writing on 'allographic' practices, where he calls upon architects to embrace the map as a form of architectural notation (along with the score and the script). Allen views mapping as a strategy for working with complexity at urban scale, while leaving space for the indeterminate relations that urban planners and architects are unable to foresee.<sup>17</sup>

These contributions to the discourse on architectural representation are persuasive and the impact can be identified in the wide range experimental mapping techniques employed in of Schools of Architecture across Europe and beyond. Beyond the relative freedom of the student project, open-ended forms of mapping have been important tools in the work of architects and urbanists, particularly those operating outside of the tight constraints (and 'red line boundaries') of mainstream commercial practice. As well as Corner's own practice (he is trained as a landscape architect), research-led practices such as Tschumi's 'Manhattan Transcripts', Chora's 'Urban Flotsam', and atelier d'architecture autogeree's 'relationscapes' have pushed the boundaries of what a map does (or could do) in terms of challenging existing modes of spatial production.<sup>18</sup> The enduring impact of Corner's essay is perhaps due to the boldly optimistic attempt to use mapping to draw together the traditionally closed fields of professional urban planning and architecture with the open-ended processes of art and performance practice. While Corner does not go far as he might in terms of looking beyond mapping as representation, the idea that the potential of creative and artistic mapping (as a tool to shape and produce space) lies not in what it *represents* but what it *does* has been influential in uniting cartographic theory with theory and more experimental methods from architectural, art and performance practices.

### 3.1.3 Destabilising the map (and the territory)

Critical challenges to the way that maps are comprehended, studied, and used in architectural and urbanist practices may have moved the debate forward, but much of this discussion remains within the safe confines of the map as a coherent or stable form of representation.<sup>19</sup> The influence of post-structural theory has further challenged this stable conception of the map, with Del Casino and Hanna drawing upon Deleuze & Guattari's 'multiple entryways' alongside Judith Butler's theories of performativity to rethink maps as "mobile subjects, infused with meaning through contested, complex, intertextual, and interrelated sets of socio-spatial practices".<sup>20</sup> This approach seeks to dismantle the traditional distinctions between the map and the territory, between map production

<sup>17</sup> Stan Allen, pp. 49–50.

<sup>18</sup> Bernard Tschumi, *Manhattan Transcripts* (London: Academy Editions, 1994); Petrescu; R. Bunschoten, H. Binet and T. Hoshino, *Urban Flotsam: Stirring the City* (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2001).

<sup>19</sup> Kitchin, Perkins and Dodge, p. 17.

<sup>20</sup> Vincent J. Del Casino Jr. and Stephen P. Hanna, 'Beyond the "Binaries": A Methodological Intervention for Interrogating Mapas as Representational Practices', *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies*, 4 (2006), 34–56 (p. 36).

and map use, and between author and reader. Maps and spaces are conceptualised as co-producing each other through spatial performance - neither can be thought of preceding the other. The map shapes the way we experience a city, just as the city shapes the map. One contemporary example of this phenomenon can be identified in the way that tourists use sophisticated online mapping tools to imagine a place before they go, or to re-live (and reshape) the experience after their visit. This suggests that the map (as a representation of space) can shape and (re)shape the experience of real space, just as those real spaces have shaped the map. These new 'geographical imaginings' demonstrate the fluidity and contested nature of both space and map, and is described by Perkins as a 'hybrid mapping'.<sup>21</sup> This radical re-thinking of maps requires an epistemological shift, with the focus on how maps (in all their diverse forms) emerge differently for all individuals, and that in that constantly changing emergence, individuals re-make the world through a 'co-constitutive production' or performance.<sup>22</sup> The idea of map-making and map-reading as situated practices also suggests a need to rethink methodological approaches to cartography, with Del Casino and Hanna proposing a qualitative ethnographic approach as a way of documenting the 'performed identities' of this hybrid mapping.<sup>23</sup>

#### 3.1.4 The map as a 'discursive zone'

The so-called 'spatial turn' has brought issues of space and place, as well as cartographic and geographical perspectives, firmly into the discourse of the arts, humanities and social sciences. While a number of geographers have displayed a general scepticism about the belated and uncritical interest in space and spatial theory, Soja argues that this epistemological shift marks the rise of a 'critical spatial imagination'.<sup>24</sup> Influenced by post-modern geography, anthropology, ethnography and sociology, new generations of artists and creative practitioners have also rediscovered the potential of mapping as an open-ended, exploratory, and propositional tool.<sup>25</sup> Others have developed these ideas to study the significance of navigation in the construction of identity or pioneered ways of mapping space through non-representational or 'more-than-representational' approaches.<sup>26</sup> In this context, mapping becomes a means of 'finding' and announcing complex social, political and temporal relationships within the 'milieu' of a site.<sup>27</sup> This process of annunciation is not only accomplished, as in the past, through visual representations such as the drawing, text,

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<sup>21</sup> Perkins, p. 2.

<sup>22</sup> Kitchin, Perkins and Dodge, p. 21.

<sup>23</sup> Del Casino Jr. and Hanna, p. 51.

<sup>24</sup> Edward W. Soja, 'Taking Space Personally', in *The Spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary perspectives*. London:, ed. by Barney Warf and Santa Arias (London: Taylor & Francis, 2009).

<sup>25</sup> Corner, p. 224.

<sup>26</sup> Perkins, p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> Corner, p. 224.

trace, print, video, or photograph, but now through a number of active or 'live' forms including walking, storytelling, listening, and performing.

### 3.2 An overview of 'more-than-representational' mapping practices

#### 3.2.1 Indigenous cartography

Much of the discourse on the 'performative' traditions of mapping begins by looking back to the cartographic practices of indigenous and nomadic populations. Indigenous mapping is diverse in nature, reflecting the huge variety of cultural traditions across the world. The study of these practices is not straightforward – for many cultures and traditions there may be little surviving evidence of non-material and oral traditions beyond contact with Western anthropologists or through the documentation of colonial powers.<sup>28</sup>

Indigenous mapping tends to be oriented around the process as opposed to the map as product or artefact.<sup>29</sup> Non-representational 'process-orientated' modes such as rituals, gestures, songs, and other forms of performance are central to the way that many cultures spatially organise and represent the world around them.<sup>30</sup> These symbolic, spoken and performed traditions sit somewhat uneasily alongside the Western tradition of cartography, which has celebrated the scientific representation of reality. Along the way there are numerous examples of European cartographers digressing into subjective and imaginative representational techniques, including decorative, satirical and allegorical maps.<sup>31</sup> Maps were also present through 18<sup>th</sup> century literature, as well as in everyday practices such as embroidery and board games.<sup>32</sup> Despite these everyday playful and decorative functions of maps, the dominant rise of Western cartography is inextricably linked to the Enlightenment principles of scientific progression and the use of maps as military tools.<sup>33</sup> Woodward and Lewis argue that the way that the dominant Western history of cartography has overlooked such forms of non-representational mapping has resulted in a narrow understanding of maps and of what counts as a 'legitimate' map.<sup>34</sup> Woodward and Lewis go on to suggest that a distinction is required between 'map-making' (Western cartography) and the broader practices of 'mapping' (which includes a wide variety of representational techniques and symbolic forms). However, rather

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<sup>28</sup> Perkins, p. 4.

<sup>29</sup> Margaret Wickens Pearce and Renee Pualani Louis, 'Mapping Indigenous Depth of Place', *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 32 (2008), 107–26 (p. 110).

<sup>30</sup> John Pickles, *A History of Spaces: Cartographic Reason, Mapping and the Geo-Coded World* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 15.

<sup>31</sup> Perkins, pp. 4–5.

<sup>32</sup> Rachel Hewitt, *Map of a Nation: A Biography of the Ordnance Survey* (London: Granta Books, 2010), p. 203.

<sup>33</sup> Hewitt, p. 203.

<sup>34</sup> David Woodward and G. Malcolm Lewis, *The History of Cartography: Cartography in the Traditional African, American, Arctic, Australian, and Pacific Societies* (Chicago, IL.: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 2.

than separate the two, Pickles argues that indigenous non-representational practices should be used to challenge and critique the practices of modern scientific mapping.<sup>35</sup>

### 3.2.2 Avant-garde artistic mapping

In tracing the developments in performative cartography, a number of authors focus on the role of Avant-garde art movements.<sup>36</sup> The 20<sup>th</sup> Century 'expansion' of art saw artists deploying forms of ethnographic practice - engaging with the city at street level and prioritising 'social realities and life situations' over art objects and aesthetic concerns.<sup>37</sup> Through critical and avant-garde practice, artists have challenged and expanded the boundaries of cartography. In turn, this has led to an increasing number of geographers and other spatial researchers engaging with artistic methods or research collaborations with artists.<sup>38</sup>

In the 1930s the Surrealists began to look beyond cartography as representation, engaging with the city through textural and photographic recordings of everyday meanderings. This process, linked to Andre Breton's notion of automatism, informed some of the key first-person narratives of wandering in of Paris by Aragon, Soupault, and Breton himself. These texts went on to become significant influences on Benjamin's Arcades Projects, and subsequently the Lettrists and the Situationist International (SI) group.<sup>39</sup> Benjamin used the wanderer or 'flâneur' as a critical concept, a figure whose 'aimless wanderings' revealed connections and moments hidden to those preoccupied with more purposeful goals.<sup>40</sup> Meanwhile, as the central figure within the SI, Guy Debord sought to embed art practice directly within the city, offering a radical response to rationalist urban planning approaches and the capitalist fragmentation of the West.<sup>41</sup> The SI proposed deliberate tactics of resistance to the spectacle of capitalist modern life by construction of situations - "moments of life concretely and deliberately constructed by the collective organization of a unitary ambience and a game of events".<sup>42</sup> These collective social actions or 'mobile spaces of play' called on citizens to participate in the spectacle of urban life and not just remain a passive consumer or 'spectator'. Debord developed upon the previous ideas of 'psychogeography', the Surrealist drift (*dérive*) and

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<sup>35</sup> Pickles, p. 15.

<sup>36</sup> Les Roberts, *Mapping Cultures: Place, Practice, Performance* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 10.

<sup>37</sup> Christel Hollevoet, 'Wandering in the City', in *The Power of the City / The City of Power* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1992), p. 33.

<sup>38</sup> Hawkins, p. 13.

<sup>39</sup> Brook and Dunn, pp. 22–23.

<sup>40</sup> Mike Savage, 'Walter Benjamin's Urban Thought: A Critical Analysis', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 13 (1995), 201–16 (p. 207) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1068/d130201>>.

<sup>41</sup> Denis Cosgrove, 'Maps, Mapping, Modernity: Art and Cartography in the Twentieth Century', *Imago Mundi*, 57 (2005), 35–54 (p. 41).

<sup>42</sup> Situationist International, 'Definitions', trans. by Ken Knabb, 1958 <<http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/definitions.html>> [accessed 27 September 2013].

Benjamin's flâneur, borrowing and redefining some of the key Situationist terms in his text 'Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography'.<sup>43</sup> In recent years the terms and techniques of the Situationists have been appropriated by all manner of artists, photographers, writers, performance-makers and urban explorers, to reimagine the city as a dynamic, malleable assemblage, bricolage, or as an alternative to the homogenous 'all-knowing pictorial image' of the map.<sup>44</sup> Psychogeography has since been claimed by various arts and scientific disciplines, despite the fact that it was conceived with a deliberate vagueness that was resistant to formal methodologies or tangible outcomes.<sup>45</sup> While the influence of Situationist walking practices can be clearly identified in the critical agenda of contemporary site-specific performance-makers (including examples such as Wrights and Sites, Graeme Miller, and Mike Pearson referenced in chapter 2), authors such as Carl Lavery have warned of drawing straightforward comparisons. Lavery reminds us that while the Situationists may have been interested in performing, they strongly rejected organised theatre as depoliticised, exclusive and bourgeois. This criticism stretches to more experimental theatrical forms such as Kaprow's Happenings.<sup>46</sup> This political stance of Debord and others is closely aligned to that of their associate Henri Lefebvre, who called for the re-situation of theatre – for it to be freed from institutions and a privileged, complacent constituency of society and to be re-situated and encountered on the street.<sup>47</sup> The group's political agenda has been linked to their rejection of art as a marketable product and the development of art and performance practices that circumvented issues of representation and commodification.<sup>48</sup> Despite his strong stance against the art object, Debord's 1957 fragmented map of Paris with bold red arrows remains one of the most iconic images associated with subjective or experiential mapping. Pinder has argued that in fragmenting and collaging existing representations, the Situationist maps were another means of 'disrupting' dominant cartographies (which they saw as an effort to stabilise and make coherent time-space), and therefore convey an alternative vision of the city.<sup>49</sup> Others, such as Brook and Dunn, have argued that the 1957 map has been taken out of context, and its contemporary re-appropriation is more of a reflection of the demands of our 'image-laden' society.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> G. Debord, 'Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography', in *Situationist International Anthology*, ed. & trans. by K Knabb (Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006) <<http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/index.htm>> [accessed 4 June 2013].

<sup>44</sup> Perkins, p. 7; Massey, p. 109.

<sup>45</sup> Brook and Dunn, p. 21.

<sup>46</sup> Carl Lavery, 'Situationism', in *Performance and the Contemporary City: An interdisciplinary reader*, ed. by Nicolas Whybrow (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 92–93 (p. 93).

<sup>47</sup> Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, p. 173; Whybrow, p. 104; Harvie and Etchells, p. 52.

<sup>48</sup> Francesco Careri, *Walkscapes: Walking as an Aesthetic Practice* (Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 2002), p. 148.

<sup>49</sup> D. Pinder, 'Subverting Cartography: The Situationists and Maps of the City', *Environment and Planning A*, 28 (1996), 405–27 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1068/a280405>>; Massey, p. 109.

<sup>50</sup> Brook and Dunn, p. 27.

Many of the artists and practices that have explored the city by walking have been drawn to more 'banal' places (Dada) or the 'urban periphery' (Smithson) as a way of critiquing the wider processes of urbanisation and decay. Robert Smithson's 'Tour of the Monuments of Passaic' in 1967 is one of the earliest and best known examples, alongside subsequent practices such as the 1976 Flux-tours of New York. More recently, the practice of locating and traversing such 'forgotten' urban spaces has been revived by many other artists and spatial practitioners, including the European collective Stalker.<sup>51</sup> The group describes their walking practice, or 'transurbance', as a:

*"collective mode of expression and a tool for mapping the city and its transformations, of gathering stories, evoking memories and experiences, and immersing themselves with others in a place".<sup>52</sup>*

The work of geographer David Pinder has charted the renewed interest in psychogeography and 'urban exploration', through the work of Iain Sinclair, Richard Wentworth, and Social Fiction, as well as the walking performances of Sophie Calle and Francis Alÿs.<sup>53</sup> Pinder describes how these forms of practice, which seek to represent the city through narrative or storytelling, represent a particular opportunity to link academic theory, creative practice, and political activism.

Marginal and abandoned urban spaces are now explored and documented in the work of countless photographers, artists, performances-makers and activists.<sup>54</sup> Solà-Morales identified the term 'Terrain Vague' to describe the appeal of such marginal spaces - urban sites that convey a sense of absence or dereliction as well as an uncertain promise or possibility.<sup>55</sup> The paradoxical, yet optimistic, view of the urban periphery offered by Solà-Morales and others might be contrasted with the reality of nondescript business parks, warehouses, and ring-roads found at in the marginal spaces of many European towns and cities. The banality of these spaces, perhaps better described by Augé's term 'non-places', is represented in recent works such as the films of Patrick Keiller and psychogeographic walks of Iain Sinclair.<sup>56</sup> Recent criticism by authors such as Minton and Hatherley has exposed the way in which much of this seemingly vacant or derelict land is now predominantly controlled by private corporations. Bought up and securely fenced off to prevent the type of transgression practised by Stalker or the SI, developers are happy hold onto parcels of urban land in

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<sup>51</sup> Careri, pp. 23–24.

<sup>52</sup> Awan, Schneider and Till, p. 44.

<sup>53</sup> David Pinder, 'Arts of Urban Exploration', *Cultural Geographies*, 12 (2005), 383–411 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1191/1474474005eu3470a>>; David Pinder, 'Errant Paths: The Poetics and Politics of Walking', *Environment and Planning-Part D*, 29 (2011), 672.

<sup>54</sup> Careri, pp. 22–23.

<sup>55</sup> Ignasi Solà-Morales, 'Terrain Vague', in *Anyplace*, ed. by Cynthia Davidson (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995).

<sup>56</sup> Iain Sinclair, *London Orbital* (London: Granta Books, 2002).



the hope of future opportunities for profitable development.<sup>57</sup> In spite of this, new spatial practices have emerged in response to the fencing off and privatisation of the city. One prominent example is the contemporary practice of urban exploration or ‘place hacking’.<sup>58</sup> In a recent ethnographic study of these practice, Garrett has described the way that explorers gain entry to (and photograph) forgotten, private, or half-constructed urban sites that are off limits to ordinary citizens.

Whether extreme or everyday in nature, these practices involve the practitioners challenging normative ways of occupying or traversing in, through, or around the city. As Pinder summarises, these practices are “ways of sensing, feeling, and experiencing spaces differently, and, by contesting ‘proper’ orderings of space, allowing something ‘other’ to emerge”.<sup>59</sup> Breaking the rules and taking on this role of ‘other’ in the city is often associated with a rejection of the values of a consumer-driven productive society. This role is not without its critics, with authors such as Flanagan arguing that that the ability to wander and drift might be limited to those that have the means to have free time (bourgeois) and are not restricted in their movement.<sup>60</sup>

### 3.2.3 Everyday walking and mapping

Alongside the earlier writing of Benjamin, Breton, and Debord, the author who stands out as perhaps most influential on contemporary the spatial practice of mapping-through-walking is French sociologist, Michel de Certeau. His short chapter ‘Walking in the City’ has been a common departure point for both spatial researchers and performance theorists seeking a grounding in the everyday spatial experience of the street. De Certeau begins by drawing a clear distinction between a top-down or totalising view of the city (the voyeur) with the pedestrian act (the walker). In a passage reminiscent of Lefebvre’s ‘representations of space’, de Certeau suggests that those who seek such to produce a ‘simulacrum’ of the city through representations (notably urbanists, planners, and cartographers) must make themselves ‘alien’ to their own daily behaviour and the daily behaviour of others.<sup>61</sup> In contrast, everyday practitioners or walkers live ‘down below’ the visibility line and “write the urban text without being able to read it”.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Anna Minton, *Ground Control: Fear and Happiness in the Twenty-First-Century City* (London ; New York: Penguin Books, 2009); Owen Hatherley, *The New Ruins of Great Britain* (London ; New York: Verso Books, 2010).

<sup>58</sup> Bradley L Garrett, *Explore Everything: Place-Hacking the City* (London ; New York: Verso Books, 2013).

<sup>59</sup> David Pinder, ‘Arts of Urban Exploration’, pp. 386–387.

<sup>60</sup> Mary Flanagan, *Critical Play: Radical Game Design* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2009), p. 196.

<sup>61</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 93.

<sup>62</sup> de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. xiii.

*“the networks of these moving, intersecting writings compose a manifold story that has neither author nor spectator, shaped out of fragments of trajectories and alterations of spaces: in relation to representations, it remains daily and indefinitely other”.*<sup>63</sup>

Models of performance that employ walking as a primary mode of practice (e.g. audio-walks, guided tours, psychogeographic walks and other forms of urban exploration) often exploit the utopian - yet strange - fragmentary nature of the pedestrian act. According to Lavery, ‘Walking in the City’ reminds us that the ephemeral, unplanned experience of life on the street cannot be represented by text or imagery alone, and therefore cannot be commodified, consumed, or objectified. This relates back to the first-hand nature of walking (and performance) as a lived and embodied experience - the walker must be physically present in urban space, and that presence infers a direct sensory or haptic engagement with the city.<sup>64</sup>

The second major contribution of ‘Walking in the City’ is in de Certeau’s comparison between the speech act and pedestrian act. De Certeau’s proposal - that the act of walking the urban system is an ‘enunciation’ and represents what the speech act is to language - immediately brings to mind Derrida’s destabilisation of signification, as well as Del Casino and Hanna’s post-structural theory of map-use.<sup>65</sup> For de Certeau, urban space is not an abstract Cartesian concept or a stable container for social activity to be poured into. Space is only brought into existence through practices of walking, and to walk the city is to continuously rewrite it - or ‘appropriate’ it for yourself.<sup>66</sup>

In the context of de Certeau’s characterisations of the cartographer and pedestrian, it is useful to turn to the writing of Tim Ingold, who also reminds us that the vast majority of maps are still ephemeral - produced as stories or for the purpose of directions, or by storytellers retracing their steps in narrative.<sup>67</sup> Ingold’s writing on inhabiting and wayfaring proposes that, despite advances in technology and transport, all travel is still ‘movement in real time’. This perspective ties into the wider ‘mobilities turn’ in the social sciences, with authors such as Ole Jensen reminding us that our everyday movements are acted out, performed and lived (as well as designed and planned from above).<sup>68</sup> The bodily experience of place-to-place travel is a reminder that there is no way of detaching our mind to view the world objectively from high above and, furthermore, any attempt to

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<sup>63</sup> de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 93.

<sup>64</sup> Carl Lavery, ‘The Pepys of London E11: Graeme Miller and the Politics of Linked’, in *Performance and the Contemporary City: An interdisciplinary reader*, ed. by Nicolas Whybrow (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 149–67 (p. 155).

<sup>65</sup> de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. xiii.

<sup>66</sup> de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, pp. 97–98.

<sup>67</sup> Tim Ingold, *Lines : A Brief History* (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 84.

<sup>68</sup> Ole B. Jensen, *Staging Mobilities* (Routledge, 2013)

<<http://fr.forumviesmobiles.org/video/2014/03/04/mise-en-scene-des-mobilites-2212>>.

produce an 'objective view' is merely an illusion.<sup>69</sup> Doreen Massey's theory of space also explores the relationship between walking, narrative, and pleasure and similarly draws heavily upon de Certeau. Massey argues that the notion of walking as a means of travelling from A-B as efficiently, safely and quickly as possible ignores the significance of the pleasure of movement and mobility.<sup>70</sup> This is echoed in Coyne's description of walking as connecting people with their 'basic grounding as human beings'.<sup>71</sup> Massey goes on to highlight the way in which spatial journeys can contain encounters with unforeseen people and places. An understanding of space that can allow for 'loose ends, beginnings and ongoing stories' is therefore seen as an act of resistance to the fixed and coherent view that maps (falsely) promise.<sup>72</sup> Coyne promotes this idea of walking as an interstitial position of uncertainty – and borrows de Certeau's notion of 'tactical' practices to describe the way in which the walker employs a series of constant manipulations in order to get themselves back 'on course', rather than (strategically) moving from one known position to another.<sup>73</sup> For others, the distinction between top-down (cartographic) and bottom-up (pedestrian) approaches is considered less productive. In her comprehensive study of mapping and walking, O'Rourke turns to artistic and performance practices that blur the boundary between cartography, performance, and the everyday pedestrian act.<sup>74</sup> O'Rourke proposes a methodology whereby close (first-hand) readings of these artistic mapping practices serve as an approach to better understand the complex relationship between the map and the city.

### 3.2.4 Artistic mapping and 'ethnographic' performances

From the activities of artists, the Surrealists, the Situationists, and the writing of Michel de Certeau, to the rediscovery of psychographic techniques by artists, academics, performance-makers, and modern-day flâneurs, the use of walking as a creative tool by has had an enduring and growing appeal.<sup>75</sup> Artistic mapping practices have become a method of critically engaging with the city – contesting the view of a fixed or stable environment by representing the transitory nature of urban experience and the multiplicity of urban narratives.<sup>76</sup> Site-specific performance-makers and visual arts practitioners have further opened up the dialogue between cartographic representations and ethnographic forms of practice. An increasingly common feature of art and performance practices

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<sup>69</sup> Ingold, p. 96.

<sup>70</sup> Massey, p. 94.

<sup>71</sup> Richard Coyne, *The Tuning of Place Sociable Spaces and Pervasive Digital Media* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2010), p. 158.

<sup>72</sup> Massey, pp. 107–109.

<sup>73</sup> Coyne, p. 158; de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. xix.

<sup>74</sup> Karen O'Rourke, *Walking and Mapping: Artists as Cartographers* (MIT Press, 2013), p. xix.

<sup>75</sup> Brook and Dunn, pp. 13–14.

<sup>76</sup> Corner, p. 233; Ruth Sienkiewicz, 'Mapping the Everyday Within the City: Walking as a Tool for Urban Regeneration' (unpublished MArch, University of Sheffield, School of Architecture, 2006), p. 2.

that foreground site, social relations and a highly personalised experience of place is the role of the artist as a 'street level' ethnographer.<sup>77</sup> Corner suggests that, within this role, the artist as 'field worker' can gain a "remarkably detailed and socially colourful sense of local dynamics and desires".<sup>78</sup>

Writing on the ways in which performance, ethnography and mapping have permeated into the contemporary visual art, Roberts employs the example of the 'Diorama Maps' of Japanese photographer Sohei Nishino. Nishiro's 'maps' consist of large-scale composite images, made up of thousands of photographs, conveying a panoramic view of the city while also retaining a sense of a multiplicity of individual photographic moments.<sup>79</sup> Nishiro's artworks are clearly representational, and, at an immediate level, are recognisable as maps in the sense that they present an iconographic depiction of the city's landmarks. However, in contrast to the ubiquitous technologies of aerial photography or the virtual navigation of Google Earth, Nishiro's ethnographic mapping builds an understanding of the city through the 'embedded social and spatial practice' of navigating on foot. The process of gathering the thousands of images relies on the many conversations and interactions with people and places over a long period of time.<sup>80</sup>

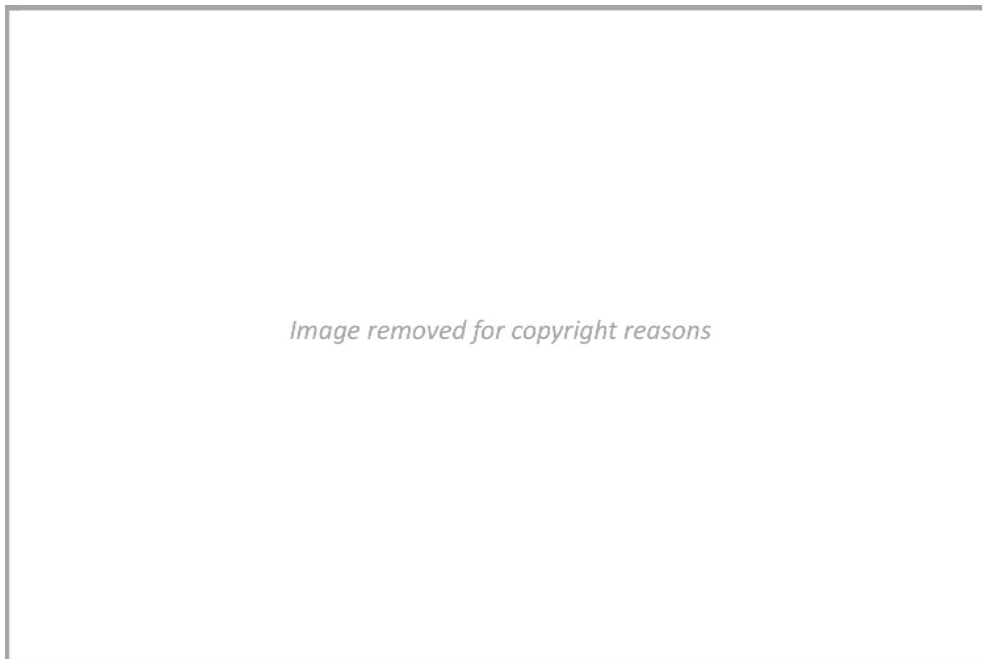


Figure 3.1. Sohei Nishino – Extract from 'Diorama Map London', 2010. Image: © Sohei Nishino  
<<http://www.soheinishino.com/en/works/dioramamap/london/>>.

<sup>77</sup> Hawkins, p. 13; Corner, p. 243.

<sup>78</sup> Corner, p. 243.

<sup>79</sup> Roberts, pp. 6–7.

<sup>80</sup> Roberts, p. 6.

A second recent performance/ installation that explicitly draws upon everyday cartography is 'From Here to There' by Nobutaka Aozaki. In this work Aozaki plays the role of a lost tourist, asking other pedestrians to provide directions to a nearby location. The artist rejects the use of digital mapping technologies, preferring that the (unwitting) participants provide him with a hand-drawn map. These maps are typically sketched onto any available scrap of paper, and are adorned with annotated directions and representations of local landmarks. The artist then montages these hand drawn maps together in order to make them function as parts of a larger map of the city.<sup>81</sup> Despite the obvious reference to Kevin Lynch's research, this is no gestaltist attempt to de-codify the way people imagine and represent the city - the maps are valued for their fragmentary and often highly subjective nature. Aozaki appears interested in representing both the multiplicity of individual perception and, returning to de Certeau, the 'blindness' of each individual author. As in the Diorama Maps, there is an evident desire to build up a gradual and partial map of the city that also documents the multiplicity of personal interactions that have led to its production.

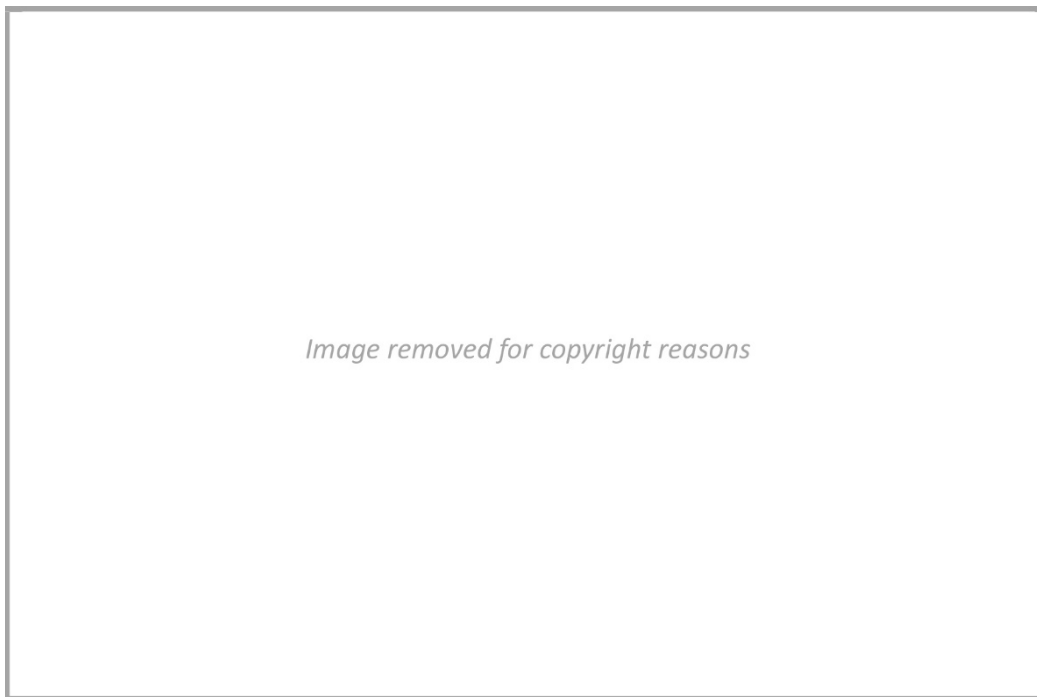


Figure 3.2 Nobutaka Aozaki - 'From Here To There' (detail), 2012. Image: © Nobutaka Aozaki  
<<http://www.nobutakaaozaki.com/maps.html>>.

A third example of ethnographic performance-as-mapping is provided by Tehching Hsieh, a durational performance artist known for challenging the physical and psychological boundaries of

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<sup>81</sup> Nobutaka Aozaki, *From Here to There*, 2012 <<http://www.nobutakaaozaki.com/maps.html>> [accessed 16 August 2013].

performance. Prior to the commencement of his 'One Year Performance 1981-1982', Hsieh signed a performance contract that stated:

*"I, Tehching Hsieh, plan to do a one year performance piece.*

*I shall stay OUTDOORS for one year, never go inside.*

*I shall not go in to a building, subway, train, car, airplane, ship, cave, tent.*

*I shall have a sleeping bag.*

*The performance shall begin on September 26, 1981 at 2P.M. and continue until September 26, 1982 at 2P.M."*

Hsieh documented his struggles with a daily series of maps charting the daily journey he made around the city.<sup>82</sup> Red lines on the maps are occasionally interrupted by dots where some 'meaningful events' are marked, such as places of shelter and encounters with the authorities. To the viewer of this documentary material, the 365 maps (one for each day) not only function as traces of space and time, but act as an invitation to imagine both the sense of freedom and suffering endured during this year-long performance.

Even this limited selection of projects demonstrates the breadth of artistic practice that 'consciously and critically' deploy the skill sets of ethnography or cartography to engage with a site.<sup>83</sup> A related (if less extreme) endeavour is typically enacted out in the very early stages of siting and conceiving site-specific (theatrical) performance. Both Alan Lane (Artistic Director of *Slung Low*) and Britt Jurgensen (Fools Proof Theatre and Director of *the Anfield Home Tour*) describe the long hours spent on site by writers and directors of site-specific performances - walking the streets, documenting significant visual cues, meeting local people, and listening to their stories. In the later stages of conception they might also be joined by members of the production team to test and develop proposed walking routes, as well as key viewpoints, sightlines, and vistas.<sup>84</sup> Returning to the cross-cutting writing of 'Theatre / Archaeology' (introduced in chapter 2), Pearson and Shanks have adopted the term 'deep mapping' to describe and theorise this type of extensive engagement with (a) place:

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<sup>82</sup> Adrian Heathfield and Tehching Hsieh, *Out of Now: The Lifeworks of Tehching Hsieh* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2009); Tehching Hsieh, *One Year Performance 1981-1982*, <<http://www.tehchinghsieh.com/>> [accessed 6 September 2013].

<sup>83</sup> Hawkins, p. 13.

<sup>84</sup> Lane, 'Research Interview with Alan Lane, Artistic Director of *Slung Low*'; Britt Jurgensen, 'Director's Note: About the Process of Making *The Anfield Home Tour*', 2012.

*"the deep map attempts to record and represent the grain and patina of place through juxtapositions and interpenetrations of the historical and the contemporary, the political and the poetic, the discursive and the sensual; the conflation of oral testimony, anthology, memoir, biography, natural history and everything you might ever want to say about a place ...".<sup>85</sup>*

Deep mapping is not only a technique of knitting a performance or artwork into the historical, social, cultural and environmental fabric of a place, but also describes an artistic and political conviction - the artwork becomes so entangled with a place that it could not be imagined belonging anywhere else.<sup>86</sup> Although many other cultural practices have appropriated these concepts, deep mapping can be thought of as a tool to facilitate memory and raise political and historical consciousness around locality and community.<sup>87</sup> It not only describes what might have happened in a place, but alludes to what might happen there in future.

Pearson has latterly adopted another term, 'chorography', to describe a similar concept to deep mapping. A chorographic approach is one that also strictly pertains to the local and the specificities of a place, but in doing so is deliberately discounts 'other' places that fall outside its sphere of interest.<sup>88</sup> This 'view from the inside' is closely related to Lucy Lippard's writing on art practice and locality, and she describes the known and particular 'resonance' that comes with intimately knowing a place. Most often, place is entwined with personal memory - a layered location replete with human histories and memories, that has 'width as well as depth'.<sup>89</sup> A chorographic approach to locality has obvious significance in terms of site-specific performance, although some critics have warned that such a strong focus on locality can risk tending towards a nostalgic view of places and communities.<sup>90</sup> Moreover, in retaining a highly sensitive approach to local engagement, artists and performance-makers also risk their work being labelled as 'parochial', and as a result suffering in terms of audience and influence.<sup>91</sup> While not denying that ethnographic-type engagement and a strong sense of locality are highly valuable approaches, Hal Foster alludes to Bourdieu's 'ethnographic mapping' in his warning that in assuming the role of cartographer or ethnographer, the artist is at risk of presuming an authority over the site and the stories of its communities.<sup>92</sup> While admitting that many innovative, authentic and sensitive modes of practices do exist, Foster is

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<sup>85</sup> Pearson and Shanks, pp. 64–65.

<sup>86</sup> Pearson in Kaye, *Art into Theatre*, p. 211.

<sup>87</sup> Lucy R. Lippard, *The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentered Society* (New Press, 1998), p. 248.

<sup>88</sup> Pearson, p. 31.

<sup>89</sup> Lippard, *The Lure of the Local*, p. 7.

<sup>90</sup> Kwon, *One Place after Another*, p. 159.

<sup>91</sup> Hawkins, p. 7.

<sup>92</sup> Hal Foster, 'The Artist as Ethnographer', in *The Traffic in Culture: Refiguring Art and Anthropology*, ed. by George E. Marcus and Fred Ralph Myers (University of California Press, 1995), p. 302 (p. 306).

particularly apprehensive about the role of the institution in setting up what he terms ‘pseudo-ethnographies’. This term describes a surface-level engagement with places and communities or a kind of ‘ethnographic self-fashioning, where the other is appropriated or fashioned into an ‘artistic guise’.<sup>93</sup> This criticism (and other issues raised in Foster’s essay) have been echoed and developed by others such as Miwon Kwon, Grant Kester, Suzanne Lacy, and Claire Bishop and are explored in greater detail in Chapter 4.

### 3.2.5 Guided walks and tours

The use of maps and guides has particular importance when visiting a new place. Upon arriving in an unfamiliar urban environment, the individual spatial experience is likely to be mediated by some form of cartographic representation – whether a road map, guidebook, or Smartphone app. This has been the case throughout the history of Western Europe, with the history of the tourist guide being traced back to 1<sup>st</sup> century accounts of the pilgrimages to Jerusalem through to the ‘Murray’ guidebook of the Grand Tour in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>94</sup> Official tourist boards and commercial organisations have a long history of producing physical maps and walking guides and, increasingly, tourists are able to access a range of more interactive and interpretative material through themed tours of the city - on foot, by bus, bicycle, or online application. The tourist experience, therefore, becomes mediated by an exchange between the mapping activity and the space of the built environment.<sup>95</sup>

While official or commercial tours may focus around famous architectural sights, historical events, or celebrated residents, more specialist themed tours have also emerged to take participants ‘off the beaten track’. Such tour typically guide participants around the city through the frame of educational or historical information, narrative, or a mix of other artistic content (music, poetry, spoken word, or soundscape). They may be guided by sensory engagement with a neighbourhood, such as the practice of ‘smell-mapping’ led by artist and researcher Victoria Henshaw or via one of a variety of interactive ‘audio-walks’.<sup>96</sup> The audio-walk - a practice employing recorded sound and voice to guide participants through the urban site usually using a personal audio player - has emerged from a unique combination of number of fields, including (oral) history, museology, sound

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<sup>93</sup> Foster, ‘The Artist as Ethnographer’, p. 306.

<sup>94</sup> Simon Garfield, *On the Map: Why the World Looks the Way It Does* (London: Profile Books, 2012), pp. 297–298.

<sup>95</sup> Brook and Dunn, pp. 11–12.

<sup>96</sup> Conor McGarrigle, ‘The Construction of Locative Situations: The Production of Agency in Locative Media Art Practice’ (unpublished PhD, Dublin Institute of Technology, 2012), p. 88; Victoria Henshaw, *Urban Smellscapes: Understanding and Designing City Smell Environments* (London: Routledge, 2013).



art, and performance.<sup>97</sup> Participants may experience intimate locations, encounters or stories that would be otherwise inaccessible without a specialist local knowledge.<sup>98</sup> Similar in nature are practices known as 'urban treasure hunts'. Often a product of collaboration between artists and researchers, this form of urban tour encourages both tourists and local residents to engage in the city in a way that disrupts the everyday experience. By promoting a playful view of the city as a place of secret histories, hidden treasures, and chance encounters, this is one of the emerging forms of practice that encourages participants to look upon the city with 'fresh eyes'.<sup>99</sup>

The popularisation of such 'alternative' tours might be thought of as part of the shift towards the so-called 'post-tourist', first defined by Maxine Feifer and developed by others such as Urry and Judd. Amongst the main features of the post-tourist, Judd identifies a desire for freedom from officially sanctioned tourist enclaves and activities and explore urban centres as spectacles in themselves.<sup>100</sup> Both Feifer and Urry have suggested that a key aspect of post-tourism is the constant appetite for change and delight, and in pursuit of something different the post-tourist is happy to mix 'high culture', kitsch and popular activities alongside more unconventional experiences.<sup>101</sup> The enjoyment that results from 'jumping' from one culture or context to another is possibly one of the attractions of the artist-led or 'alternative' walking tour or treasure hunt, which often make these kinds of conceptual leaps between contrasting modes of urban experience.

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<sup>97</sup> Toby Butler, 'A Walk of Art: The Potential of the Sound Walk as Practice in Cultural Geography', *Social & Cultural Geography*, 7 (2006), 889–908 (p. 1).

<sup>98</sup> Markus Montola, Jaakko Stenros and Annika Wærn, *Pervasive Games: Theory and Design* (Burlington, MA.: Morgan Kaufmann, 2009), p. 42.

<sup>99</sup> Kathy Battista and others, 'Exploring "an Area of Outstanding Unnatural Beauty": A Treasure Hunt around King's Cross, London', *Cultural Geographies*, 12 (2005), 429–62.

<sup>100</sup> Dennis R. Judd, 'Visitors and the Spatial Ecology of the City', in *Cities and Visitors: Regulating People, Markets, and City Space*, ed. by Lily M. Hoffman, Susan S. Fainstein, and Dennis R. Judd (Malden, MA; Oxford; Carlton: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), pp. 23–39 (pp. 34–35).

<sup>101</sup> Maxine Feifer, *Going Places: The Ways of the Tourist from Imperial Rome to the Present Day* (London: Macmillan, 1985), pp. 269–270; John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies*, Theory, Culture and Society (London: SAGE, 1990), pp. 90–91.



Figure 3.3. A psychogeographic walk in 2012 exploring the hidden walkways of central Manchester with the Loiterers Resistance Movement. Image: Author.

The role of the 'post-tourist' appears to appeal to local residents as well as visitors. This is demonstrated by practices such as 'The Loiterers Resistance Movement' a collective of artists and activists who lead monthly psychogeographic tours of the 'hidden stories' and forgotten spaces of Manchester.<sup>102</sup> Many other cities and towns across the world have their own specialist interest groups, local enthusiasts, and tour guides - offering participants to become 'tourists in their own city'.<sup>103</sup> A similar claim is made by the organiser of the 'Sheffield Friday Night Ride' (SFNR), a voluntary group who explore the city of Sheffield through the curation of a monthly themed group bike ride. A particular quality of these events is in the remarkable depth and diversity of the research that goes into the production of each walk or ride. In performing this form of tour, participants imprint new layers onto the city, both in terms of the ephemeral geographical trace of the participants and the layers of knowledge held and disseminated down through the ever-changing group involved. Beyond that, the nature of events such as the Friday Night Rides also work as dramaturgical compositions, which links this practice into some of the other more explicitly

<sup>102</sup> Morag Rose, 'The Loiterers Resistance Movement' <<http://nowhere-fest.blogspot.co.uk/>> [accessed 26 September 2013].

<sup>103</sup> Mick Knott, 'Sheffield Friday Night Ride' <<http://www.sfnr.org.uk/>> [accessed 24 September 2013].

performance-based tours and trails (and this is without considering the unexpected sight of 30+ cyclists wearing high visibility clothing and congregating in unusual or unexplored parts of the city!)

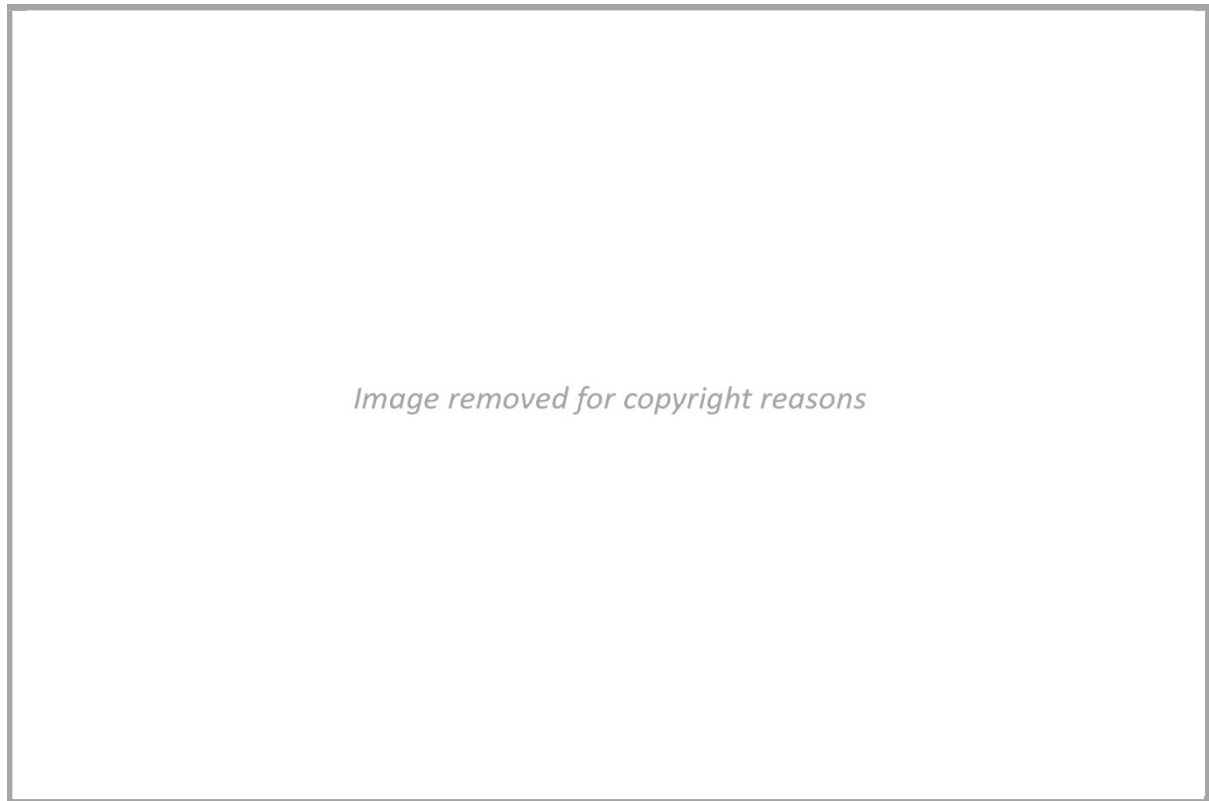


Figure 3.4. Cyclists on the 'Sheffield Friday Night Ride' exploring the abandoned infrastructure of the East End.  
Image: © Gemma Thorpe.

### 3.2.6 Mapping technologies and performance

The use of digital technologies has been increasing since the early 1990s across many aspects of theatre and performance.<sup>104</sup> Recent developments in mobile technology and online Geographical Information Systems (GIS) have supported a number of significant links between mapping, performance, and technological practices.

For a number of years, digital designers and others in the field of Human-Computing Interaction (HCI) have understood the potential of context-aware computing and location-based media. Coined originally by Bill Schilit, Norman Adams, and Roy Want, the term 'context-aware' originates from distributed computing, where a device exploits its mobile capacity through applications that could be 'aware' of the changes to the environment and react accordingly.<sup>105</sup> The most prominent system of

<sup>104</sup> Steve Dixon, *Digital Performance: A History of New Media in Theater, Dance, Performance Art, and Installation*, annotated edition (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2007).

<sup>105</sup> B. Schilit, N. Adams and R. Want, 'Context-Aware Computing Applications', in *Mobile Computing Systems and Applications*, 1994. WMCSA 1994. First Workshop on, 1994, pp. 85–90.

determining location through digital processing is through Global Positioning System (GPS), a technology developed for military use but made available at higher resolutions to the wider public on May 1st 2000.<sup>106</sup> This change has enabled ordinary users to use GPS devices for everyday navigation, with the ability to determine their current location (using the Latitude/ Longitude coordinate system) to within the range of a few metres. The opening up of GPS technology has been linked to the advent of location-based ludic practices – such as the game or activity known as ‘Geocaching’. Spread by new online communities, Geocaching is a form of treasure hunting that works by synthesising a real-world activity (hiding and finding physical ‘caches’) in real space with clues marked in virtual (map) space. GPS technology is used to mediate between the virtual space of a GIS or coordinate system and the physical space of a real city or landscape.<sup>107</sup> Put another way, GPS technology enables a form of interactive and embodied mapping previously unimaginable – “people are more likely to be part of the map, instead of being its subject”.<sup>108</sup> The excitement and enjoyment of this process has seen the game grow in popularity across the world.

Over the past 10 years, GPS capabilities have been embedded in an increasing range of technological devices and applications to render them ‘location-aware’ - often without the user even noticing.<sup>109</sup> Online media content can be ‘geo-tagged’, again using the Latitude/ Longitude coordinate system. As with Geocaching, this opens up the possibility of augmenting physical space with searchable ‘location-based’ information.<sup>110</sup> McCullough describes this practice using the term ‘urban markup’ – with users ‘annotating’ the physical space of the city by adding to the increasingly dense layers of location-based media, user-generated content and social data.<sup>111</sup> Technology commentators such as Shepard have gone on to propose the idea that this data layer is becoming ‘as important, possibly more important’ than physical architecture in the shaping of the urban experience.<sup>112</sup> Shepard uses the example of urban signage and information, once strictly the domain of local government or

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<sup>106</sup> Coyne, pp. 149–150.

<sup>107</sup> J. Farman, ‘Locative Life: Geocaching, Mobile Gaming, and Embodiment’, in *Proceedings of the Digital Arts and Culture Conference* (presented at the After Media: Embodiment and Context, University of California, Irvine, 2009) <[http://escholarship.org/uc/ace\\_dac09](http://escholarship.org/uc/ace_dac09)> [accessed 22 November 2011].

<sup>108</sup> Perkins, p. 4.

<sup>109</sup> Coyne, p. 149.

<sup>110</sup> Fredrik Espinoza and others, ‘Geonotes: Social and Navigational Aspects of Location-Based Information Systems’, in *Ubicomp 2001: Ubiquitous Computing*, 2001, pp. 2–17 <[http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/3-540-45427-6\\_2](http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/3-540-45427-6_2)> [accessed 26 April 2013]; McGarrigle, ‘The Construction of Locative Situations: The Production of Agency in Locative Media Art Practice’; Mark Bilandzic and Marcus Foth, ‘A Review of Locative Media, Mobile and Embodied Spatial Interaction’, *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, 70 (2012), 66–71 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhcs.2011.08.004>>; Malcom McCullough, ‘Epigraphy and the Public Library’, in *Augmented Urban Spaces: Articulating the Physical and Electronic City*, ed. by Alessandro Aurigi and Fiorella De Cindio (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2008).

<sup>111</sup> McCullough, p. 63.

<sup>112</sup> Mark Shepard, ‘Toward the Sentient City’, in *Sentient City: Ubiquitous Computing, Architecture, and the Future of Urban Space*, ed. by Mark Shepard (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2011), pp. 16–37 (p. 18).

other public and private agencies, but now challenged by the 'spatial transductions' of mobile devices.<sup>113</sup>

Literature on mapping and GPS technologies refers to a number of different types of 'mobile device' and forms of 'ubiquitous and pervasive computing', although nowadays the most common manifestation of this technology is the personal mobile phone. Montola and others have argued that the increasing dominance of the mobile phone as an interface for social interactions and the receiving and sharing of media is a key factor in the rise of mapping and location-based technologies.<sup>114</sup> According to recent research by Ofcom, 92% of UK adults now own and use a personal mobile phone.<sup>115</sup> Within this statistic there has also been a huge growth in 'Smartphones' - devices that offer advanced computing and a sophisticated combination of environmental sensors including camera, GPS, and accelerometer, as well as online access and data transmission capabilities (often referred to using the '3G' or '4G' mobile telecommunications standards).<sup>116</sup> Over the course of this research project (2011-2014) Smartphone ownership has increased from 27% to 51% of UK adults and from 50% to 77% of 16-24 year olds.<sup>117</sup> The popularisation of Smartphone technology has seen mapping employed in an increasing range of social situations, with people creating sharing and collaborating via maps in ways that would have been unimaginable 10 years ago.<sup>118</sup> Coyne is one of several critics to have used de Certeau's writing to highlight the way in which the 'voyeuristic' view afforded by ubiquitous Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and digital mapping technologies has modified the practice of walking and navigating.<sup>119</sup>

The rapid growth of public interest in the mobile interactions supported by Smartphone technology has attracted widespread interest from commercial applications for education, storytelling and tourism, as well as for creative practitioners such as media artists and performance-makers.

Widespread academic interest in mobile and location-based technologies has expanded out of

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<sup>113</sup> Shepard, pp. 24–26.

<sup>114</sup> Montola, Stenros and Wærn, p. 179.

<sup>115</sup> Ofcom, *Communications Market Report: UK 2013* (London: Ofcom, 1 August 2013), p. 78 <[http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/cmr/cmr13/2013\\_UK\\_CMR.pdf](http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/cmr/cmr13/2013_UK_CMR.pdf)> [accessed 24 February 2014].

<sup>116</sup> Katsiaryna Naliuka and others, 'A Narrative Architecture for Story-Driven Location-Based Mobile Games', in *New Horizons in Web-Based Learning - ICWL 2010 Workshops*, ed. by Xiangfeng Luo and others (Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer, 2011), , 11–20 (p. 11) <<http://www.springerlink.com/content/8645688828302278/>> [accessed 22 November 2011].

<sup>117</sup> Ofcom, *Communications Market Report: UK 2011* (London: Ofcom, 4 August 2011) <[http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/cmr/cmr11/UK\\_CMR\\_2011\\_FINAL.pdf](http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/cmr/cmr11/UK_CMR_2011_FINAL.pdf)> [accessed 9 November 2011]; Ofcom, *Communications Market Report: UK 2013*, p. 23.

<sup>118</sup> Perkins, p. 129.

<sup>119</sup> Coyne, p. 157; Katherine S. Willis, 'Sensing Place: Mobile and Wireless Technologies in Urban Space', in *Encountering urban places: visual and material performances in the city*, ed. by L. Frers and L. Meier (Aldershot: Ashgate Pub Co, 2007), pp. 155–68 (pp. 160–161).

specialist fields such as of Human-Computing Interaction (HCI) research, with research into mobile and ubiquitous interactions now established as an academic field in its own right. Alongside this technologically-focussed research, a whole range of cultural and urban theorists, sociologists, geographers, media artists and performance-makers have become concerned with the wider implications (and potential applications) of mobile and location-based experiences.

In the wake of rapid growth in ownership of GPS and internet-enabled Smartphones over the course of this research, location-based media guides have emerged as a significant genre in their own right.<sup>120</sup> Commercial interest can also be seen in the plethora of commercial heritage and tourist applications offering location-based guides to popular historical, architectural, and cultural site in cities across the world.<sup>121</sup> Mobile Smartphone applications have even been designed and marketed to aid participants in the artistic practice of the *dérive* (which perhaps also signifies the extent to which the Situationists and others have become subsumed into mainstream culture).<sup>122</sup> Following the coining of the term 'locative' (location-based) arts in 2004, a number of artists have pioneered the crossover between performance and location-based or mobile computing.<sup>123</sup> Borrowing freely from digital mapping technologies, gaming, performing arts, and the pioneering practice of Geocaching, artistic and cultural experiences supported by location-based technologies have (re)introduced a sense of physicality, participation and play to the city.<sup>124</sup> This form of practice often emerges from collaborations between researchers, artists, and governmental or cultural institutions. Such research collaborations might explore aspects of storytelling, aural history, or heritage, typified by recent projects such as Toby Butler's 'Memoryscapes'.<sup>125</sup> A number of authors (including those with a background in interaction design as well as others from arts and performance disciplines) have theorised these forms of location-based experiences as 'performances'.<sup>126</sup> The work of the UK performance-makers Blast Theory has been particularly well-documented by researchers at the

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<sup>120</sup> Anne Galloway and Matt Ward, 'Locative Media as Socialising and Spatializing Practice: Learning from Archaeology', *Leonardo electronic almanac*, 14 (2006)

<<http://www.citeulike.org/group/13952/article/7802277>> [accessed 24 April 2013]; McGarrigle, 'The Construction of Locative Situations: The Production of Agency in Locative Media Art Practice', p. 88.

<sup>121</sup> McGarrigle, 'The Construction of Locative Situations: The Production of Agency in Locative Media Art Practice', p. 88.

<sup>122</sup> Eduardo Cachucho, 'Dérive "Urban Exploration App"' <<http://deriveapp.com/>>; Conor McGarrigle, 'Walkspace: Walking Art App for the iPhone' <<http://www.walkspace.org/walks.html>>.

<sup>123</sup> D. Hemment, 'Locative Arts', *Leonardo*, 39 (2006), 348–55.

<sup>124</sup> Flanagan, p. 189.

<sup>125</sup> Toby Butler, 'Memoryscape: Integrating Oral History, Memory and Landscape on the River Thames', in *People and their Pasts: Public History Today*, ed. by Paul Ashton and Hilda Kean (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 223–39.

<sup>126</sup> J. Farman, 'Mobile Media Performances as Asynchronous Embodiment', *The International Journal of Screendance*, 2 (2012), 48–51; Gemeinboeck and Saunders; Harvie and Etchells; Steve Benford and Gabriella Giannachi, 'Interaction as Performance', *interactions*, 19 (2012), 38–43  
<<http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/2168931.2168941>>.

University of Nottingham's 'Mixed Reality Lab'.<sup>127</sup> The 'mixed-reality' model of performance that has been developed by Blast Theory in works such as 'Rider Spoke' (2007), has been widely discussed in both performance and gaming theory.<sup>128</sup> Rider Spoke mixes the performance model of the 'audio walk' with urban markup and invites participants to record personal (digitised) narratives on an urban site. Participants' recordings are then located and geotagged to be made accessible to any other participant 'who happened upon that same location'.<sup>129</sup> Another artist-led project that invites participants to challenge the 'objective' space of the map is Invisible Flock's 'Bring the Happy' (2010), which overlays a traditional cartographic representation of the city with own individual's (happy) memories.<sup>130</sup> While the hybrid mapping approach of Bring the Happy first appeared as a physical installation in the UK city of Leeds in 2010, it has since expanded into an interactive online interface, making use of the popular Google Maps Application Programming Interface (API). This API, also used for similar projects such as Eric Rieper's 'It Happened Here' and the game GeoGuessr, offers developers, designers and artists open access for to the vast amounts of mapping data collected and held by Google.<sup>131</sup> Other examples that have combined the space of the map and the space of the city to leave audio and visual media traces include the Canadian audio project 'Murmur' and 'Urban Tapestries' by the group Proboscis.<sup>132</sup> The Urban Tapestries project is of particular interest as an early example of an artist-led project using location-based media to map the everyday geographies of local residents. By asking these participants to 'geo-annotate' space with personal content or interconnecting narratives, the project employed location-based media as a critical mapping tool. Furthermore, the project was an early effort to create and demonstrate an 'alternative vision' for the use of location-based technologies for mapping and sharing knowledge within a community.<sup>133</sup> Farman has theorised the act of leaving geo-tagged personal content as a documentary process - the annotation or trace 'transforms' the site of the recording into something more than just a physical

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<sup>127</sup> Benford and Giannachi, *Performing Mixed Reality*; Steve Benford and others, 'The Design and Experience of the Location-Based Performance Uncle Roy All Around You', *Leonardo Electronic Almanac*, 14 (2006) <[http://www.leoalmanac.org/journal/vol\\_14/lea\\_v14\\_n03-04/roy.html](http://www.leoalmanac.org/journal/vol_14/lea_v14_n03-04/roy.html)> [accessed 26 April 2013].

<sup>128</sup> Farman, 'Mobile Media Performances as Asynchronous Embodiment', p. 48; Flanagan, p. 199; Harvie and Etchells, p. 58. See also examples of Blast Theory's work in the directory of site-specific performance practice in Appendix 1.

<sup>129</sup> Farman, 'Mobile Media Performances as Asynchronous Embodiment', p. 48.

<sup>130</sup> Invisible Flock, *Bring the Happy*, 2011 <<http://www.invisibleflock.co.uk/bringthehappy/>> [accessed 2 April 2013].

<sup>131</sup> Eric Rieper, *It Happened Here*, 2013 <<http://www.ericrieper.com/ithappenedhere/>> [accessed 19 September 2013]; 'GeoGuessr' <<http://geoguessr.com/>> [accessed 2 October 2013].

<sup>132</sup> Giles Lane and others, 'Urban Tapestries: Public Authoring, Place and Mobility' (Proboscis, 2005) <[http://socialtapestries.net/outcomes/reports/UT\\_Report\\_2006.pdf](http://socialtapestries.net/outcomes/reports/UT_Report_2006.pdf)> [accessed 26 April 2013]; Shawn Micallef, James Roussel and Gabe Sawhney, *[murmur]*, 2003 <<http://murmurtoronto.ca/>> [accessed 1 May 2013].

<sup>133</sup> Lane and others.

environment - producing what he terms 'distinct sense of embodied space'.<sup>134</sup> These practices also raise questions of how people experience intimacy in the mobile media age, particularly within the hectic pace of urban life. Farman suggests that the engagement with someone else's personal voice or story produces a sense of intimacy yet also a sense of dislocation – as it no longer signifies the presence of the storyteller (Farman describes this as 'asynchronous embodiment').<sup>135</sup> The mobile interface therefore acts as a 'hinge' between material (real) and digital (virtual) space, presence and absence, and synchronous and asynchronous time.<sup>136</sup>

As these examples demonstrate, performances supported by mobile interactions and mapping technologies now manifest in many different forms, each with its own set of conceptual aims, time structures, spatial limits, interfaces, user experiences, and levels of participation. This rapidly expanding field is not only testing disciplinary boundaries, but is being constantly reshaped and redefined by the development and accessibility of new consumer technologies and the invention of new prototypes. This thesis is, therefore, less concerned with the technology itself, but rather the relations that mobile devices and other technological interfaces might enable between participants or between a participant and their environment. The relationship between participant and environment is explored explicitly in a number of works that combine 'scientific' methodologies with artistic mapping practice. One example is Christian Nold's 'Bio-mapping', which has been recreated in several towns and cities across the world.<sup>137</sup> Bio-mapping involves participants walking around their local neighbourhood while wearing a custom-designed interface - a fingertip sweat sensor attached to a GPS device. The project employs the (now familiar) processes of walking and embodied mapping, but also augments the map with additional data about the 'emotional intensity' of the participant at different points along the walk, represented on a map as a graph. While Nold is open about some of the methodological assumptions made in the project, he also suggests that the process of 'measuring' the emotional state of participants is less relevant than the stories and explanations that the process elicits.<sup>138</sup> This, he argues, relates to Brecht's idea of 'Verfremdung' (de-familiarisation), where a performative distancing allows the viewer to take a critical stance on familiar circumstances. This interpretation suggests that the combination of technology as a prop

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<sup>134</sup> Farman, 'Mobile Media Performances as Asynchronous Embodiment', p. 49.

<sup>135</sup> Farman, 'Mobile Media Performances as Asynchronous Embodiment', p. 49.

<sup>136</sup> Farman, 'Locative Life', p. unpaginated.

<sup>137</sup> Christian Nold, *Bio Mapping / Emotion Mapping*, ongoing 2004 <<http://biomapping.net/>> [accessed 3 April 2013].

<sup>138</sup> Nold, *Emotional Cartography*, pp. 4–5.



and the results as a memory-trigger allow people to describe their urban experience in a way that 'they would have never done otherwise'.<sup>139</sup>

The 'performative' role of location-based technology for spatial knowledge acquisition has wide-reaching potential, and is a topic of interest across a range of disciplines. In addition, Nold admits, it is of great interest to commercial and marketing agencies. The potential for such practices to be used as instruments for commercial gain is one of a number of important critical and ethical issues related to projects that use location-based media, GPS, and GIS technologies (despite the benign or participatory nature of many artistic projects such as Bio-mapping). Another common concern raised in many projects of this nature is the exclusion of certain social groups, particularly where expensive and potentially unfamiliar technology is required to participate.<sup>140</sup> Wider concerns are raised by authors such as Flanagan around the political implications of using GPS and location-based media and the way in which these experiences might incorporate 'problematic assumptions about space and city'.<sup>141</sup> Despite these advances, Coyne concludes that digital mapping and GPS technologies pose 'little threat' to the 'formation and persistence' of meaningful spaces and places.<sup>142</sup>

These concerns are highlighted further by the reliance of new mapping technologies on commercial and Governmental agencies- whether it is mapping data managed by Google or the military satellites used to relay GPS signals. Gemeinboeck and Saunders conclude that an inherent contradiction underpins all location-based media art and performance practices, with their ostensible progressivity (through participatory methods and a focus on embodied 'street-level' exploration of the city) is at odds with their reliance on a highly politicised military technology. Despite this futile struggle to escape the Cartesian grid, Gemeinboeck is optimistic, arguing for the potential of location-based performance practices to open up space for (critical) inquiry.<sup>143</sup> Nonetheless, the potential for everyday mapping technologies to be transfigured into the apparatus of a surveillance state is highlighted in critical projects such as 'What if Google Maps Went Live' by Flux/S', which imagines a near future scenario where Google-maps style aerial photography is broadcast live in real-time.<sup>144</sup> In a concept that has echoes of the imagination of Borges or Carroll (and their stories of 1:1 maps), the hyper-reality of the Flux/S project suggests a future of mapping where the distinction between the real and representational becomes eroded.

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<sup>139</sup> Nold, *Emotional Cartography*.

<sup>140</sup> Flanagan, p. 190.

<sup>141</sup> Flanagan, p. 190.

<sup>142</sup> Coyne, p. 161.

<sup>143</sup> Gemeinboeck and Saunders, p. 172.

<sup>144</sup> flux/S, *What If Google Maps Went Live... Public Space as Performative Space*, 2011 <<http://vimeo.com/41377618>> [accessed 16 April 2013].

### 3.3 Summary: what now constitutes a 'map' (of the city)?

As these wide-ranging discussions demonstrate, mapping has played a significant role in recent epistemological shifts across a range of academic disciplines, acting as both a research method and 'defining trope' or 'discursive zone', around which a broad spectrum of spatial interests, creative practice, digital tools and research can converge.<sup>145</sup> In this context, it is no longer sufficient to conceive maps only in terms of visual representations of space and, for many, the focus on non-representational and experiential practices is a deliberate break from the 'hegemonic' practice of cartography. On the other hand, 'mapping' is a well-worn expression that is in danger of becoming overused - applied loosely and uncritically to describe a whole range of contemporary urban practices including graffiti, filmmaking, urban exploration, installation art, advertising, and digital media.<sup>146</sup> If any urban intervention be studied as a 'map', what might be gained by considering performance practices, occupations or actions as forms of mapping?

Developing on the concept of site-specific performance introduced in chapter two, this chapter has aimed to interrogate performative 'mapping' practices as tools to survey, analyse, reinterpret, reimagine, and engage with the complexity of the contemporary city.<sup>147</sup> It concludes by restating and summarising the myriad ways in which these practices, of walking, guiding, storytelling, and performance-making, have been (or could be) conceived or theorised as 'maps'. Further exploration of the different roles that performing-as-mapping – including the way that these practices are sited, conceived, produced, performed, and evaluated - will be introduced in the next chapter and developed across the case study chapters.

**As authored.** Authors such as Corner and Harley remind us that, despite giving the illusion of 'benign neutrality' or objectivity, all maps are only capable of telling one story of a place, with choices and details highlighted, abstracted or omitted. The agency of maps can be both a positive, emancipatory force, but they can equally be used by powerful agencies to control or coerce. The nature of the map as authored is not just limited to traditional representational cartography. Performances-as-maps might also operate in the same way, employing skill and invention alongside the (authoritarian processes of editing, curating, and directing) in order to entertain, stimulate, move or affect participants in a particular way as directed by the performance-maker.

**As co-constitutive.** Just as post-structuralism reframed the relationship between the map and the territory, the performance and the site might also be understood as being co-constitutive. Site-

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<sup>145</sup> Roberts, p. 14.

<sup>146</sup> Brook and Dunn.

<sup>147</sup> Brook and Dunn, p. 7.

specific performances (or performances-as-maps) shape the city, just as the city shapes the performance. The deliberately blurring (or even complete dissolution) of the distinction between 'real' and 'representation' is identifiable in site-specific performances created by groups such as Forced Entertainment and Rimini Protokoll.<sup>148</sup> This may be conceived as a way of unsettling the audience, or putting them on the edge of their seat, but in doing so it can potentially question the stability of the real site.<sup>149</sup>

**As framing devices.** Framing is central to traditional forms of cartography - the boundaries, scale, and resulting dimensions of the map are determined by the political or social sphere of interest (and traditionally by the limits of printed media). Many forms of performance practice (but particularly site-specific or 'chorographic' approaches) are also organised around a sphere of interest – occupying both a particular physical territory and a social site.<sup>150</sup> However, just as interactive and digital mapping has challenged the limitations of a frame and scale, technological performance practices have also challenged the temporal, spatial, and social structures of traditional 'live' performance – with performers and participants able to network across multiple temporalities, sites, and in between real and imagined spaces.

**As ethnographic practices.** Contemporary performance practices aim to promote a grounded understanding of the city through the embodied and socially situated practice of walking and conversing with other people at 'street-level'.

**As tactical.** Like the performance of everyday pedestrians, performance practices (as maps) might be thought of as a tactical in nature. According to de Certeau, tactical practices are reliant on being in time or 'on the wing'. While this gives tactical practices a certain advantage, their lack of a 'proper base' means they are not able to keep any significant gains that they might make. This is contrast to 'strategic' spatial representations (such as maps or masterplans), which not only prioritise space over time but try to fix 'proper' relations between people and places.<sup>151</sup>

**As psychogeographic practices.** Walking and urban exploring practices derived from Lettrist and Situationist art practice reimagine the city as a fluid assemblage or bricolage, challenging the stable and deterministic view of the city. By breaking the rules that determine where and how we should traverse the urban fabric (or by inventing new ones), psychogeographic mapping practices aim to reimagine the everyday as exciting, with the fixed and controlled as malleable and open.

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<sup>148</sup> L. Tomlin, 'Transgressing Boundaries: Postmodern Performance and the Tourist Trap', *TDR/The Drama Review*, 43 (1999), 136–49.

<sup>149</sup> See also Kaye, *Site-Specific Art*, pp. 13–24.

<sup>150</sup> See further discussion of the expansion of the social site in chapter 4.

<sup>151</sup> de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, pp. xviii–xix.

**As counter-mapping practices.** Counter-mapping practices seek to directly challenge cartographic hegemonies, taking advantage of their power of maps to empower those who lack agency in the production of space. Counter-mapping practices typically operate by using mapping to reveal latent or politically motivated conditions, therefore changing or subverting perceptions of public spaces. In terms of performance practice, contesting 'proper' orderings of space to enable something 'other' to emerge.<sup>152</sup> Practices such as the 'Permanent Breakfast' and 'Park(ing)' use public performance to temporarily disrupt controlled public or pseudo-public space by re-programming (or re-mapping) that space with a humorous or playful use.<sup>153</sup>

**As pedagogical or identity-shaping.** Mapping and map-making can support a 'politically gentle' approach to participation or community engagement, where multiple views or experiences of place are invited. Through non-professional modes of representation, storytelling, performance, and dialogue, this form of mapping can act as a tool to raise awareness of 'where we find ourselves' in the world.<sup>154</sup> While some practitioners may choose to represent or curate this identity using a physical map as an artefact, the telling or performing of local stories, myths, and half-truths can also act as a powerful form of mapping to shape and reshape the identity of a place.

**As a working table.** Site-specific performance can render visible 'multiple and sometimes disparate field conditions' by bringing together the real and virtual or imaginary within the same space.

**As ludic practices.** Both maps and performances have been used by artists to energise or 'gamify' the city - turning banal or underused environments into playgrounds or familiar walking routes into urban treasure hunts. As discussed briefly in chapter two, contemporary site-located performance is closely related to the emerging field of 'pervasive' gaming, and many performance-makers are comfortable in shifting between or straddling these two fields. Many forms of ludic and performance practice (first-person adventures or games) are underpinned by GPS and digital mapping technologies, posing a further set of political, artistic, and ethical questions.

**As tourist guides.** A range of performance-as-mapping practices offer an 'alternative' tourist experience, taking participants to discover historic sites and hidden treasures or acting as a 'Mis-guide' to anywhere.<sup>155</sup> While these practices can be an exciting way for the (post) tourist to experience the city, growing commercial interest in these tools has led to concerns around the 'instrumentalisation' of performance-making by city authorities and tourist agencies.

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<sup>152</sup> David Pinder, 'Arts of Urban Exploration', pp. 386–387.

<sup>153</sup> See appendix 1 for further details of these practices.

<sup>154</sup> Lippard, 'Notes from a Recent Arrival (1995)', p. 157.

<sup>155</sup> Wrights and Sites, *A Mis-Guide to Anywhere* (Exeter, 2006) <<http://www.mis-guide.com/>>.

**As tools for urban regeneration or ‘place-making’.** As well as means of attracting tourism, artistic performing-as-mapping projects have attracted attention as a means of catalysing urban development projects and contributing to so-called ‘place-making’ programmes of urban authorities. Projects are wide-ranging in scale and form, and include practitioners taking up residence in vacant shops, community development work around the theme of the built environment, and direct interventions in underused urban spaces.<sup>156</sup>

The link between artistic/ performance practice and urban planning and development is advanced in chapter 4, with an examination of the critical issues that emerge when performance is deployed as a way of engaging local communities in the contested processes of urban development and regeneration.

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<sup>156</sup> See appendix 1.



## 4 From site-specific to community-specific: participation, instrumentalisation, and ‘arts-led’ urban regeneration

*“Why city? Because it is contested space. Because it is used at the same time by many people, sectors, factions, groups whose interests do not by any means coincide. Because it layers commerce, manufacture, leisure, the political sphere – because it demands negotiation, compromise, co-operation, conflict, agreement in order to function, in order to move. Because if you look for even a moment at those things, you see ripples out to the bigger questions of our time – the relationship between local and global, between cultures nested in and around each other.”<sup>1</sup>*

### 4.0 Introduction

The opening chapters of the thesis have drawn primarily upon perspectives from the fields of performance studies, arts practice, architecture and (critical) geography to describe the multi-layered relationship between site-specific performance, mapping, and the city. The use of performance-making to challenge established political, social and economic frameworks has been explored as an ongoing concern of Avant-garde artists throughout the second half of the twentieth century. This chapter shifts the focus towards the role of performance practices within social and economic policy, specifically in the fields of urban planning, regeneration, and development.

The idea that the arts (including performance-making) might play a role in policy arenas such as urban renewal and community cohesion emerged from the UK community arts movement and the radical or activist arts movements of the 1970s. While much of this activity in the UK was marginalised during the era of Conservative government under Margaret Thatcher, the election of New Labour in 1997 marked a shift in UK policy in regards to urban regeneration and the participation of local communities. Urban regeneration emerged as a far-reaching concept that drew together a range of professional and academic fields to address the complex challenges associated with the redevelopment of the inner cities. Urban regeneration has brought together ideas from urban planning, urban design and architecture, economic investment and reform, and social policy, including local governance and community participation.<sup>2</sup> Under New Labour, this policy programme

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<sup>1</sup> T. Etchells, ‘Preface’, in *Theatre & the city*, by J. Harvie (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. xii.

<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Vickery, *The Emergence of Culture-Led Regeneration: A Policy Concept and Its Discontents*, Centre for Cultural Policy Studies (University of Warwick, 2007)

was given the title of 'Urban Renaissance', with particular attention paid to the contribution of the arts, design, and culture in the revitalisation of ailing 'post-industrial' city centres.

Over recent years, research and discourse around so-called 'arts-led' (or 'culture-led') regeneration has continued to expand. The aim of this thesis is not to attempt a comprehensive analysis of the huge volume of policy documents and research related to arts-led regeneration, nor to retrace the historical emergence of the concept. Nonetheless, recent government programmes and academic research within this field are important to consider, not least because they represent an area of public policy where greater collaboration between the arts (including performance) and architecture / urbanism has been actively encouraged (and funded). As well as stressing the potential value of cultural economies, the thinking behind the Urban Renaissance highlights the potential of arts (particularly participatory forms) in bringing communities together and fostering a strong local sense of place. However, despite the breadth of research and theory developed around community participation, it remains a concept that is frequently misused or poorly implemented across the built environment professions (including urban planning, architecture, and urbanism)<sup>3</sup>.

A number of other local and national government initiatives in the UK have supported community art and performance projects for purpose of increasingly local 'participation' in the built environment. Community-orientated forms of arts and performance-making have attracted attention as having the potential to offer innovative approaches to citizen participation in the processes of urban regeneration and neighbourhood development. At the same time, performance studies offers critical models for the understanding of citizen participation - beyond the economic or positivist models often invoked by urban planners or local authorities.<sup>4</sup> The deployment of participatory art and performance practices within urban regeneration has therefore produced debate around a number of important critical issues, including evaluation and measurability, the politics of instrumentalisation, and the freedom of arts practice to explore the conflicts and contradictions inherent in the process of urban renewal.

This chapter will introduce the key theories and major policy initiatives that have contributed to the development of 'arts-led regeneration' policy, as well as documenting the more recent marginalisation of these policies as a result of the policy agenda and budget cuts of the Conservative-led coalition government. This is followed by an exploration of the critical issues arising

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<[http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/theatre\\_s/cp/research/publications/centrepubs/ccps.paper9.pdf](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/theatre_s/cp/research/publications/centrepubs/ccps.paper9.pdf)> [accessed 29 October 2013].

<sup>3</sup> Burby; Till, 'The Negotiation of Hope'.

<sup>4</sup> Chapple and Jackson, p. 487.



from the deployment of participatory arts and performance practices within the regeneration process.

## 4.1 Urban regeneration

### 4.1.1 Context

The concept of urban regeneration has played a central role in UK urban policy since the late 1970s.<sup>5</sup> Although there are many competing definitions, Vickery suggests the term refers generally to “urban transformation through the redesign, reconstruction and often re-allocation of urban land”.<sup>6</sup> It can be used as a catch-all phrase to describe a spectrum of redevelopment projects; from individual building projects and neighbourhood scale improvements through to the development of city and regional scale infrastructure projects. The process of urban regeneration is often understood as consisting of three related and interconnected activities:<sup>7</sup>

- Environmental regeneration – improving the appeal of a place through physical improvements to buildings, public realm and green spaces, new ‘iconic’ buildings, and the refurbishment and reuse of vacant or derelict land and buildings.
- Social regeneration – enhancing the skills, aspirations, and ‘social capital’ of people to enable and encourage them to become actively involved in their community.
- Economic regeneration – a range of economic measures and investment, including general economic competitiveness, business performance, and the creation of jobs and prosperity.

Tallon adds a fourth category of governance-related regeneration, which reflects the way in which local community and stakeholder participation have been placed at the centre of UK urban regeneration policy in recent years.<sup>8</sup> With so many competing agencies and priorities, urban regeneration is an intrinsically complex concept, and one that incorporates a wide range of planned socio-cultural transformations within a regulative policy framework.<sup>9</sup> In a UK context, the term commonly indicates the redevelopment of urban areas of severe decay, and areas that are subject to regeneration programmes therefore tend to also become associated with failure and inner city

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<sup>5</sup> Christopher Bailey, Steven Miles and Peter Stark, ‘Culture-Led Urban Regeneration and the Revitalisation of Identities in Newcastle, Gateshead and the North East of England’, *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 10 (2004), 47–65; Loretta Lees, ‘Visions of “Urban Renaissance”: The Urban Task Force Report and the Urban White Paper’, in *Urban Renaissance?: New Labour, Community and Urban Policy*, ed. by Robert Imrie and Mike Raco (The Policy Press, 2003).

<sup>6</sup> Vickery, p. 11.

<sup>7</sup> Andrew Tallon, *Urban Regeneration in the UK*, 2nd Ed. (Abingdon, Oxon.: Routledge, 2013).

<sup>8</sup> Tallon, p. 5.

<sup>9</sup> Vickery, pp. 14–15.

problems such as dereliction, crime, vandalism, unemployment, low housing demand, and so-called 'market failure'.<sup>10</sup>

The impact of urban regeneration policy under the New Labour government has been a focus of interest across a number of fields, with the resulting discourse producing a huge array of literature - reports from political think-thanks, government documents, and research by specialist consultancies and a range of academic disciplines. While the breadth of urban regeneration projects in the UK prohibits any kind of detailed overview in this chapter, it is important to acknowledge that regeneration is not a new activity but a complex mix of local politics, government policy, long-term planning strategies, and regional economic development. The expansive nature of urban regeneration involves a similarly large number of stakeholders including private developers and business leaders, civic and planning authorities, architects, urban designers and other built environment professionals, not to mention the local communities that are the focus of the regeneration projects.

#### **4.1.2 Community participation in urban regeneration policy.**

Community participation in the processes that shape urban built environments is another subject that has been covered extensively within urban planning and regeneration literature; from high-level policy makers, academics and political commentators to practitioners, activists, and community representatives. As an activity 'rooted in practice', much of the literature on participation in the planning process is focused around pragmatic concerns and methods to assess the effectiveness of policies on the ground.<sup>11</sup> There is comparatively less research in participatory practice and theory emanating directly from the discipline of architecture, and the overview in this chapter therefore predominately draws upon a range of planning and urban studies literature, alongside the 2005 collection of critical essays in the book 'Architecture and Participation', as well as the 2010 volume 'Architecture, participation, and society', which sets out a range of recommendations for community participation in architectural practice.<sup>12</sup>

As a highly politicised concept, 'participation' can mean very different things even across one field of study. This has been noted by several critics within the context of urban planning, where terms such as 'participation', 'community engagement' and 'empowerment' are used interchangeably to

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<sup>10</sup> Stuart Cameron, 'From Low Demand to Rising Aspirations: Housing Market Renewal within Regional and Neighbourhood Regeneration Policy', *Housing Studies*, 21 (2006), 3–16.

<sup>11</sup> Tallon, pp. 5–6.

<sup>12</sup> *Architecture and Participation*, ed. by Peter Blundell Jones, Doina Petrescu, and Jeremy Till, New Ed (Routledge, 2005); Paul Jenkins and Leslie Forsyth, *Architecture, Participation, and Society* (London: Routledge, 2010).

describe a number of different processes and objectives.<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless, community participation might be broadly described as a process by which local people and service users partake or share in the decision-making processes of administrative bodies and civic authorities.<sup>14</sup> The participation of local people, who are often described in terms of ‘communities’ or ‘stakeholders’, has become an ingrained within the planning process and public policy more broadly, although both ‘community’ and ‘stakeholder’ are themselves contested terms.<sup>15</sup> There are widespread invocations of the word ‘community’ - whether in public policy, urban planning or the arts. It is often a rhetorical term, used by both left and right with extreme ‘elasticity’ to represent excluded groups, progressive campaign groups, disenfranchised social groups, racial groups, and even powerful agencies (such as the ‘business community’).<sup>16</sup> The Tim Etchells quote used at the beginning of this chapter explores the contradictory nature of living and working within urban communities. The city as a site of variety is one of danger and unpredictability but at the same time can be a vibrant and exciting place to inhabit. As Bauman suggests, we inhabit cities for this variety and richness while also desiring the promise of assimilation and safety that the idea of ‘community’ offers.<sup>17</sup>

A number of authors trace the current wave of interest in community participation in public policy back to movements in the US and UK in the 1960s and 1970s. At the same time as a growing popular interest in local environmental issues, both American and British societies were experiencing a period of rapid urbanisation. This was creating more densely populated inner city districts and squeezing down the scale of living accommodation. The effect of a greater number of people living closer together resulted in what Friedmann describes as “sensitive and highly fragile patterns of social interaction”.<sup>18</sup> This period was also marked by a growing opposition to the dominant modes of planning, particularly the modernist vision of an efficient (functionally rational), convenient, and aesthetically pleasing cityscape.<sup>19</sup>

Around this time, critics such as Paul Davidoff began to advance early participatory theories, arguing that it was not possible for planning officials to maintain a neutral or purely rational technocratic

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<sup>13</sup> Nick Bailey, ‘Understanding Community Empowerment in Urban Regeneration and Planning in England: Putting Policy and Practice in Context’, *Planning Practice and Research*, 25 (2010), 317–32 (p. 318).

<sup>14</sup> John Friedmann, Robert Nisbet and Herbert J. Gans, ‘The Public Interest and Community Participation: Toward a Reconstruction of Public Philosophy’, *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 39 (1973), 2–12 (p. 6); Bailey, p. 318.

<sup>15</sup> Mark Baker, Jon Coaffee and Graeme Sherriff, ‘Achieving Successful Participation in the New UK Spatial Planning System’, *Planning Practice and Research*, 22 (2007), 79–93 (p. 79).

<sup>16</sup> Kwon, *One Place after Another*, p. 112.

<sup>17</sup> Zygmunt Bauman, *Community : Seeking Safety in an Insecure World*, Themes for the 21st Century (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), p. 148.

<sup>18</sup> Friedmann, Nisbet and Gans.

<sup>19</sup> Patsy Healey, *Collaborative Planning: Shaping Places in Fragmented Societies*, 2nd edn (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 18.

role.<sup>20</sup> Davidoff argued that planners should be more open about the value-judgements that they might hold, as well as advocating for communities that shared those views. Others such as Herbert Gans supported a more progressive model of advocacy, and proposed that planning had a moral responsibility to improve conditions for the least disadvantaged in society.<sup>21</sup> Authors such as Gans viewed citizen involvement as an educational and transformative process - one that helps to reconcile the needs of the individual with those of the wider neighbourhood and potentially increases a sense of community or 'belonging'.<sup>22</sup> These developments led to a more vocal discussion about the ability of local politics to be pluralist and began to change the nature of power relations between local government (and their planners), landowners, and 'ordinary' citizens.<sup>23</sup>

The period of New Labour Government from 1997- 2010 has been summarised as a shift from government to a governance agenda, with the aim of devolving more power to local communities and individual citizens via a number of local decision-making bodies.<sup>24</sup> Reforms to community participation across a number of policy areas amounted to an overarching policy of modernisation and 'civic renewal'.<sup>25</sup> These created partnerships between local government and local communities by co-opting community representatives (particularly those from 'under-represented' groups) onto decision-making boards and panels.<sup>26</sup> Despite the positive rhetoric around the local governance agenda, recent participatory policies have been characterised as placatory; representing just enough involvement to appease and therefore control citizens, whilst acting as a means for gathering political legitimisation for decisions already taken. Till contrasts Rousseau's classic theory of participative democracy with the theories of participation and democratic 'stability' critiqued by Pateman and others.<sup>27</sup> It is this second, more cynical model of participation that is arguably closer to the current reality within practices of urban planning and architecture. Despite the rhetoric of openness, local people are more likely to be consulted on urban regeneration or architectural proposals once they have already been designed in some detail and higher-level policy decisions

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<sup>20</sup> Paul Davidoff, 'Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning', *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 31 (1965), 331-38.

<sup>21</sup> Herbert J. Gans, 'Planning for People, Not Buildings', *Environment and Planning*, 1 (1969), 33-46.

<sup>22</sup> Patsy Healey, *Collaborative Planning: Shaping Places in Fragmented Societies*, 2nd edn (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 25.

<sup>23</sup> Healey, p. 25.

<sup>24</sup> Marilyn Taylor, 'Community Participation in the Real World: Opportunities and Pitfalls in New Governance Spaces', *Urban Studies*, 44 (2007), 297-317 (pp. 297-298).

<sup>25</sup> Bryan Fanning, *Lessons for the Big Society: Planning, Regeneration and the Politics of Community Participation* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), p. 24.

<sup>26</sup> DCLG, 'Communities in Control: Real People, Real Power' (TSO, 2008) <<http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm74/7427/7427.pdf>> [accessed 6 August 2013].

<sup>27</sup> Till, 'The Negotiation of Hope', p. 21.

have already been made.<sup>28</sup> However, the failure of planning authorities to host a proper dialogue with local people on the merits of a particular proposal may result in latent opposition only becoming activated once proposals have reached an advanced stage of development.<sup>29</sup> The protests that ensue from this type of situation then erode trust on both sides, potentially harming the outcomes of future participatory planning exercises. A 2010 review by Bailey and others identified a number of further issues within this process of community representation:<sup>30</sup>

- The process of selecting and inviting individuals as community representatives is often unclear, and the selection of particular voices may within a community may mask divided views.
- Individuals invited onto decision-making boards may lack experience of technical language, despite the rhetoric of community representatives having equal standing and power with established politicians and senior officers.
- These panels and boards are new and unfamiliar 'invited spaces' that reinforce existing power relations.
- Local officials often refer to the needs of 'under-represented' groups, but the way in which these peoples are categorised as such remains unclear.
- Finally (and critically), the agenda of participatory sessions are typically set by the powerful agencies of the local authorities. While this engagement work may try to tackle immediate problems such as poor housing, dereliction, vandalism, or unemployment, the wider structural inequalities that underpin many of these problems are not addressed.

It is in this context that Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation is often referred to and over the last 40 or more years this has remained a touchstone in the debate on the extent to which power is shared within participatory practice. Arnstein's ladder (which ranges from manipulation at the bottom rung, through consultation and placation up to citizen control at the top) has also attracted criticism, with many authors arguing that it is an over-simplification of the politics of participation and fails to address questions such as appropriateness, the diversity of participants (particularly in relation to 'social capital'), and the willingness of citizens to become more active agents in their local environment.<sup>31</sup> Despite these criticisms, the hierarchical model of participation persists within many

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<sup>28</sup> Till, 'The Negotiation of Hope', p. 22; Giancarlo De Carlo, 'Architecture's Public', in *Architecture and Participation*, ed. by Peter Blundell Jones, Doina Petrescu, and Jeremy Till (London ; New York: Spon Press, 2005), p. 18.

<sup>29</sup> Burby, p. 34.

<sup>30</sup> Bailey, p. 324.

<sup>31</sup> Baker, Coaffee and Sherriff, p. 82.

discussions, where the higher rungs on Arnstein's ladder are equated with 'better' participation strategies.<sup>32</sup> This issue is not just limited to discourse within planning and architecture. In the emerging field of participatory art practice, Claire Bishop has also been highly critical of the way in which Arnstein's levels of participant control have been employed to judge the efficacy of an artwork or performance.<sup>33</sup>

Despite these critical developments, participation methods within the planning system are still typically articulated as a one-way process, with local people invited or 'induced' into participating by a local authority or other agency.<sup>34</sup> This reiterates (or 're-performs') the traditional imbalance in power relations between professional experts and local people, who are positioned as marginalised or needing 'uplift' from opportunities that are handed down by intellectual, creative, institutionally empowered practitioners.<sup>35</sup> In a UK context, common methods of participatory engagement include public meetings, focus groups, questionnaires, online or printed consultation documents, public exhibitions and 'planning for real'. A 2007 review by Baker and others found that the majority of planning authorities in the UK still relied on a limited range of consultation techniques – requiring local people to be sufficiently motivated to attend consultation events or respond to questionnaires. "Consequently they tend to get low response rates dominated by those motivated by the processes".<sup>36</sup> This issue is echoed across recent literature on participation in urban planning and regeneration, and the struggle to address how to reach out beyond the 'usual suspects' has become a significant area of research in itself. While academic research and planning policies reiterate the need to open up more innovative forms of participation, there is still a tendency for authorities and professional agencies to entrench themselves in established ways of working (consultation and placation) that are strongly defended<sup>37</sup>. Within the context of this research, these issues were echoed in interviews carried out in local councils in the north of England. As one senior regeneration official suggested:

*"Nearly all of the forms of public participation that planning and regeneration use favour more articulate people with resources and confidence... I wouldn't dismiss things like planning-for-real, which try to break down some of those barriers and make it more accessible, but at*

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<sup>32</sup> Baker, Coaffee and Sherriff, p. 82; Till, 'The Negotiation of Hope', p. 25.

<sup>33</sup> Bishop, p. 279.

<sup>34</sup> Burby, p. 44.

<sup>35</sup> Kester, p. 137; Chapple and Jackson, pp. 481–482.

<sup>36</sup> Baker, Coaffee and Sherriff, p. 81.

<sup>37</sup> Baker, Coaffee and Sherriff, p. 91.

*the end of the day those with education and resources are going to find the process easier to work.*"<sup>38</sup>

In the light of such concerns over barriers to access, new participatory methods have been proposed to augment or replace some of the more traditional engagement tools. A significant amount of attention has been focused on the potential of digital methods of engagement, known as 'E-participation' (interactive websites) and 'M-participation' (mobile applications).<sup>39</sup> Advocates of these information and communication technologies (ICTs) suggest that they address some of the challenges of 'inducing' people to attend public meetings or other participatory events at specific times of day. The particular promise of M-participation is its potential to reach out to a wider range of demographics such as young adults, who tend to be severely under-represented in traditional forms of participation. Critics of these methods point to fact that ICTs are little more than new tools - they may offer new ways of disseminating and collecting information from citizens but offer little more in terms of addressing the structural issues that underpin democratic representation and decision-making in the processes of urban planning and regeneration. These issues are further highlighted by the 'digital divide' in ICTs and the more general the shift towards online participation in planning (which may also be partly motivated by cost-saving). Critics have argued that the shift towards digital platforms may further marginalise those who are already under-represented communities and individuals and cannot access these technologies.<sup>40</sup> Others have suggested that these digital tools may further divorce the urban planning process from the first-hand experience and knowledge of the site.<sup>41</sup>

If widespread participation is so difficult to encourage, why is it practiced within urban planning and architecture? Leaving the legal responsibilities of local authorities to one side, it is worth briefly returning to the underlying principles and motivations for involving local people and stakeholders in the design and development of the built environment. Following the proposal of Gans and others, it has been argued that principles of fairness and the need to represent the views of all groups, including those who are disadvantaged or marginalised, is a core part of the ethical code of

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<sup>38</sup> Simon Ogden, Research interview with Simon Ogden, City Development Manager at Sheffield City Council, 2013.

<sup>39</sup> Titiana Ertiö, *M-Participation: The Emergence of Participatory Planning Applications*, Research Briefings (Tutkimuskatsauksia) (Turku, Finland: Turku Urban Research Programme, 2013) <<http://www.turku.fi/Public/default.aspx?contentid=335600&nodeid=18632>> [accessed 22 August 2013]; Malgorzata Hanzl, 'Information Technology as a Tool for Public Participation in Urban Planning: A Review of Experiments and Potentials', *Design Studies*, 28 (2007), 289–307.

<sup>40</sup> D. C. Brabham, 'Crowdsourcing the Public Participation Process for Planning Projects', *Planning Theory*, 8 (2009), 242–62 (p. 255).

<sup>41</sup> Chapple and Jackson, p. 480.

planning.<sup>42</sup> Perhaps more significantly, authors such as Innes, Schön, and Burby have explored the value of the everyday or 'ordinary' knowledge that can help ensure that development plans reflect local conditions and values.<sup>43</sup> Progressive and humanistic voices in the fields of planning and architecture have advocated the use of methods such as deliberative listening, ecological sensitivity, and neighbourhood observation in order to engage with the 'ordinary' knowledge of local people.<sup>44</sup> In his influential text 'The Deliberate Practitioner', Forester proposes storytelling as a participatory process through which participants can explore issues and share values together.<sup>45</sup> He highlights the importance of participatory settings to encourage storytelling that is more open, evocative and demonstrative - with opportunities to address one another and avoid the narrow purposiveness of formal participatory methods.<sup>46</sup> Building on this work, Till has proposed storytelling as an overlooked but potentially productive tool within architectural and spatial production.<sup>47</sup> For Till, storytelling engages with others on a more equitable footing and can become a method of engagement that humanises the process of spatial negotiation - bringing more open-ended and imaginative ideas into play. Much in the way that Corner proposed the Deluegian map as 'working table' where the real and the virtual could be brought together, Till suggests that stories offer a space of hope, but hope that is rooted in real experience so as not to become idealised. "Stories are the place where the imagination finds lines of flight".<sup>48</sup> De Certeau also talks of stories (narratives and gestures) as rendering the city as 'believable', affecting it with unknown depth and giving access to the mythical or invisible dimensions of the city.<sup>49</sup> The role of the architect then becomes one of the listener and interpreter, drawing out the spatial implications and giving shape to the 'small narratives of streets and neighbourhoods'.<sup>50</sup> The role of narrative and storytelling as a participatory tool within architecture and urbanism will be returned to in the case studies and discussion section of this thesis.

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<sup>42</sup> Burby, p. 35.

<sup>43</sup> Burby; Donald A. Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* (New York: Basic books, 1983); Judith E. Innes, 'Information in Communicative Planning', *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 64 (1998), 52–63 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01944369808975956>>.

<sup>44</sup> Chapple and Jackson, p. 483.

<sup>45</sup> John Forester, *The Deliberative Practitioner : Encouraging Participatory Planning Processes* (London ; Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1999), p. 137.

<sup>46</sup> John Forester, p. 147.

<sup>47</sup> Till, *Architecture Depends*, p. 113.

<sup>48</sup> Till, 'The Negotiation of Hope', p. 38.

<sup>49</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life. Vol. 2, Living and Cooking*, ed. by Luce Giard, trans. by Timothy J. Tomasik, New rev. and augmented ed. (Minneapolis, Minn: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), p. 142.

<sup>50</sup> de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life. Vol. 2, Living and Cooking*, p. 143.



## 4.2 The 'Urban Renaissance'

As the introduced previously, the discourse on participation in the development of British towns and cities shifted significantly under the New Labour Government. In 1998, the architect Richard Rogers was asked to lead the 'Urban Task Force' (UTF); a group of researchers and designers charged with identifying the causes of inner city decline and presenting a new vision for city living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The report played a key role in the development of urban regeneration policy under New Labour and was a highly optimistic vision of the urban future of the UK. It set out a range of forward-thinking ideas to improve the quality of the urban built environment. These included a new focus on excellence in urban design and environmental sustainability, and a preference for compact walkable cities, mixed use districts, and high densities in residential and commercial developments.<sup>51</sup> This vision for regeneration was given a new title of the 'Urban Renaissance'; a term infused with the positive language of sustainability, diversity and community.<sup>52</sup> The UTF report formed the basis of the DETR Urban White Paper in 2000, and together these two documents set out the agenda for UK government urban policy for the next 10 years. This was supported by the formation of the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) – a quango created to raise design standards and improve the quality of urban built environment. Both CABE and the Urban Task Force called upon local authorities, planners, architects and urbanists to create culturally vibrant city centres, with mixed-use neighbourhoods, active frontages, city-centre living, high quality public spaces, performance spaces, and to support the emergence of 'café culture' in the UK.<sup>53</sup>

The Urban Renaissance programme brought forward by New Labour coincided with a period of strong economic growth, which helped to fuel a large number of urban redevelopment projects across the UK. This period, therefore, marked an important moment in recent British architectural history with cities, particularly in the north of England, seeing unprecedented investment in city centre masterplans and new civic architecture alongside, a rapid expansion of speculative city centre residential developments. At the same time, initiatives such as the Single Regeneration programme and New Deal for Communities (NDC) targeted investment in new buildings and infrastructure in specific disadvantaged areas through the creation of partnerships between local authorities, residents groups, the private sector, and the voluntary/ community / faith (VCF) organisations.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Urban Task Force, 'Towards a Strong Urban Renaissance' (An independent report by members of the Urban Task Force chaired by Lord Rogers of Riverside, 2005) <[http://www.urbantaskforce.org/UTF\\_final\\_report.pdf](http://www.urbantaskforce.org/UTF_final_report.pdf)> [accessed 3 October 2013]; Lees and Melhuish, pp. 62–63.

<sup>52</sup> Lees and Melhuish, p. 61.

<sup>53</sup> DETR, 'Our Towns and Cities – The Future: Delivering an Urban Renaissance' (TSO, 2000).

<sup>54</sup> Lees and Melhuish, p. 3.

The relationship between architectural and urban design practices and urban regeneration around this time is important to note. Whilst seen as a bonanza in construction projects (and fees) by many, critics in and around the architectural profession have raised concerns over the legacy of this period of expansive urban redevelopment. While acknowledging the design guidelines issued by CABE and the UTF were based on sound principles, critics have condemned the way in which design guidelines have been interpreted by planning authorities and executed by commercial developers. Hatherley argues that this era of development has eroded the character of cities by introducing swathes 'generic' 5-6 storey apartment blocks and 'under-used piazzas'.<sup>55</sup> Miles raises more serious concerns around the 'hegemonic' nature of urban regeneration – particularly the longer-term political and social legacy of demolishing and rebuilding large swathes of former industrial heartlands in the north of England.<sup>56</sup>

#### 4.2.1 Arts-led regeneration under New Labour

Alongside reforms in urban planning and local governance, the New Labour government explored a number of other avenues for extending citizen participation into other areas of public policy. Led by their Policy Action Team (PAT 10) and the influential Comedia consultancy group (which included Charles Landry, Franco Biannachi, and François Matarasso), New Labour endorsed the arts as a positive force across their programme of social and economic regeneration.<sup>57</sup>

In the last ten years the impact of so-called 'instrumentalisation' of the arts within social policy has been wide-reaching, and despite a change in government in 2010 and subsequent shift in government policy priorities, it continues to provoke debate. This debate has been conducted by practitioners and researchers from cultural geography, town planning, architecture, urban design, and public policy administration, as well important contributions from artists and performance-makers. This discussion has attempted to understand of the specific issues that have arisen from placing the arts at the centre of government policy.<sup>58</sup> New Labour policy on arts-led regeneration might be characterised as being formed of two distinct strands of discourse.<sup>59</sup> These two components, which are summarised in government papers such as the 1999 ODPM / DCLG report, are economic growth and social participation.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Hatherley, pp. xv–xvi.

<sup>56</sup> Malcolm Miles, *Art, Space and the City: Public Art and Urban Futures* (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY: Routledge, 1997), p. 128.

<sup>57</sup> Lees and Melhuish, p. 1.

<sup>58</sup> Vickery, p. 17.

<sup>59</sup> Lees and Melhuish, p. 6.

<sup>60</sup> ODPM / DCLG, *Regeneration through Culture, Sport and Tourism*, 1999  
<<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/155202.pdf>> [accessed 29 October 2013].

It is important here to note that much of the literature relating to arts-led regeneration tends to employ very broad-brush terms (such as ‘the arts’ or ‘cultural projects’), grouping diverse practices and projects together. The nature of ‘the arts’ and ‘performance’ in this context incorporates a huge variety of scales, practices and intentions; from community-scale engagement and site-specific performances through to the construction of multi-million pound performance spaces, signature public artworks and sculptures designed to put a place ‘on the map’.<sup>61</sup> This section attempts to draw out some of the key issues from this wide-ranging discourse without attempting restate the many academic and government-led reviews, before moving on to the more specific issues relating to participation within site-specific performance practice.

#### 4.2.2 The arts and economic regeneration

The first strand relates to the economic contribution made by the arts and creative industries. The influence of the writing of Landry and Bianchini in the UK (and Richard Florida in the US) propagated the idea that a thriving cultural sector was central to the success of a city or region, particularly its attractiveness for inward investment.<sup>62</sup> Bailey describes how many of the arguments in favour of arts-led economic regeneration assume that new arts and performance venues, festivals and cultural programmes enhance the quality of life of the wider community through a trickle-down effects of increased employment prospects, business output, and other positive economic impacts.<sup>63</sup> Alongside this direct economic impact, further benefits that have been linked to the artistic and cultural activity include the rebranding of a city’s image and the imaginative reuse of post-industrial sites. With local marketing agencies to distinguish their town or city from the increasingly homogeneity, site-specific art and performance practices have attracted increasing attention as a way of developing a distinctive place-identity.<sup>64</sup> In the UK, a number of cities have been held up as models of successful arts-led regeneration. Perhaps the most notable of these is the Newcastle/Gateshead region, which has experienced a dramatic growth in its cultural economy during the first part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>65</sup> Supporters of arts-led economic growth have also argued that improving and expanding the range of facilities and spaces for cultural production has the beneficial knock-on effect of attracting talented cultural producers and audiences to a city or neighbourhood. This process can create a virtuous circle of gentrification where an area becomes more attractive to

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<sup>61</sup> Miles, *Art, Space and the City*, p. 104.

<sup>62</sup> Florida; Charles Landry and Franco Bianchini, *The Creative City* (London: Demos, 1995).

<sup>63</sup> Bailey, Miles and Stark, p. 47.

<sup>64</sup> Miwon Kwon, ‘One Place after Another: Notes on Site Specificity’, *October*, 80 (1997), 100–106.

<sup>65</sup> Chiara Tornaghi, ‘Questioning the Social Aims of Public Art in Urban Regeneration Initiatives. The Case of Newcastle upon Tyne and Gateshead (UK)’, 2007, p. 9  
<<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/guru/assets/documents/EWP42.pdf>> [accessed 3 October 2013]; Bailey, Miles and Stark; Malcolm Miles, ‘Interruptions: Testing the Rhetoric of Culturally Led Urban Development’, *Urban studies*, 42 (2005), 889–911.

investors, developers, and buy-to-let landlords, driving forward economic growth and physical and environmental regeneration. Artists are often viewed as playing a key role as initiators of this transformational process. As Landry's 'Creative City' (republished in 2000 and 2008 as a 'toolkit for urban innovators') suggests:

*"The artist in effect is the explorer and regenerator kick-starting a gentrification process, bringing life to rundown areas and generating the development of support structures such as cafes, restaurants and some shops. They then attract a more middle-class clientele who would not have risked being the first, either through fear, the dislike of rundown areas, or pressure from peer groups."*<sup>66</sup>

This confident attitude of Landry and others has subsequently attracted a significant degree of criticism, with authors such as Lees and Melhuish suggesting that the very terms 'Urban Renaissance' and 'urban regeneration' are used directly in place of the word gentrification and the accompanying associations of class displacement and polarisation.<sup>67</sup> Critics across the fields of planning and urban regeneration have also expressed concerns over the role of the arts and cultural districts as engines of profit and growth for developers, local authorities, and property owners.<sup>68</sup> Both Smith and Miles have highlighted the issue of displacement, and the role played by policies that prioritise the movement of artists and the cultural classes into urban areas in place of existing social groups and their social infrastructure.<sup>69</sup> The role of artists and cultural producers regenerating (or gentrifying) urban neighbourhoods such as Greenwich Village in New York and Hackney in London has been well documented. Often attracted by the cheap studio and living space, the precarious role of the artist in this process is highlighted by the likelihood of displacement when property prices are driven up by the same regeneration that they helped to initiate.<sup>70</sup> Other critics including Ley have pointed to the artist's problematic role in gentrification as representing the wider commodification of art production by neo-liberal economies.<sup>71</sup> These arguments are picked up by Lees and Melhuish, who suggest that they highlight some of the negative social impacts of gentrification and alienation that accompany the deployment of the arts in producing socio-economic change:

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<sup>66</sup> Charles Landry, *The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators* (Earthscan, 2000), p. 125.

<sup>67</sup> Lees, p. 61.

<sup>68</sup> Chapple and Jackson, p. 481.

<sup>69</sup> Miles, *Art, Space and the City: Public Art and Urban Futures*, p. 107; Lees and Melhuish, p. 5; Neil Smith, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City* (London: Routledge, 1996).

<sup>70</sup> Deutsche; David Ley, 'Artists, Aestheticisation and the Field of Gentrification', *Urban studies*, 40 (2003), 2527–44 (p. 2534).

<sup>71</sup> Ley, p. 2542.

*“As an instrument of urban regeneration, then, artists and their production occupy a problematic position: agents of positive renewal but also displacement, and mediators of potential social conflicts, but also catalysts for social fragmentation.”<sup>72</sup>*

Opening up a wider critical lens, Amin and others suggest that New Labour economic policy (particularly in relation to urban regeneration) was built around an expansion of the middle class (and middle class values) at the expense of other social groups.<sup>73</sup> This has seen a shift in city centres as sites of consumption - thus blurring the distinction between cultural consumption (the gallery or theatre) and other forms of consumer consumption (restaurants, cafés, and retail districts). This important shift in the way towns and cities are used may have been welcomed by some of the more affluent sections of society, but in many urban areas this so-called progress has come at the cost of excluding other social groups and social practices.<sup>74</sup>

Malcolm Miles seeks to further question the role of artists within the neoliberal economics of urban regeneration, with particular attention paid to public art projects that work to help make profit for commercial developers. Although Miles admits that not all collaborations between artists and urban regeneration projects will have harmful impacts, he argues that social and ethical considerations are not on the agenda of most commercial developers. As a result, the interests of the designers and artists become aligned (directly or otherwise) with the political and economic interests of the private agencies funding the development. As many of these developments, Miles argues, are socially disempowering in terms of destroying the sense of place or privatising areas previously identified as public realm, artists become complicit in the process of beautifying commercial developments in order to conceal their incompatibility with a democratic society.<sup>75</sup> The ‘dressing up’ of new developments can also occur through a levying process (via programmes such as Percent for Art, Section 106 agreements, and now the Community Infrastructure Levy), with commercial developers required to make a contribution to a public art fund. Despite the existence of local government protocols for managing and distributing these levies, it is not uncommon for commercial developers wanting become involved the decision-making process of public artworks.<sup>76</sup> Simon Ogden, City Development Manager at Sheffield City Council, gives one example of this process in Sheffield:

*“(public art funded by urban development) tends to be fixed things – partly because developers want to see something for their money – they want to see something where they can say “we*

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<sup>72</sup> Lees and Melhuish, p. 11.

<sup>73</sup> Ash Amin, *Cities for the Many Not the Few* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2000), pp. 19–23.

<sup>74</sup> Ash Amin, *Cities for the Many Not the Few* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2000), pp. 22–23.

<sup>75</sup> Miles, *Art, Space and the City*, pp. 130–131.

<sup>76</sup> Miles, *Art, Space and the City*, pp. 109–110.

*did that". A piece of performance evaporates into the air, and other than a few photographs they haven't got anything to show for it, so more performance or theatre-based stuff is relatively rare."*<sup>77</sup>

Commercial involvement in the funding and commissioning of public art has, according to Hawkins, left many critics and practitioners highly suspicious of the raft of artworks and performances 'spawned' by urban regeneration programmes.<sup>78</sup> Lees and Melhuish argue that involvement in the urban regeneration process may even threaten artists and performance-makers' authenticity as practitioners, potentially undermining the value of worthwhile community arts projects.<sup>79</sup>

#### 4.2.3 The arts and social participation

The second strand of arts and cultural instrumentalisation relates to the claim that arts and performance practices can help to rebuild communities and resolve social conflict. Once again, the influence of the Comedia group reappears in Francois Matarasso's influential report 'Use or Ornament?'<sup>80</sup> Matarasso's research investigated 60 'participatory' arts projects, with the researchers collating the views of participants, professionals, observers, and others involved. The study reported a remarkable range of social benefits – for individuals, communities, and civic authorities - linked to participation in the arts.<sup>81</sup> These benefits were said to include greater social cohesion, increased sense of local identity, improved health and wellbeing, as well as improving participants' personal skills and employability<sup>82</sup>. Perhaps even more significantly, Matarasso emphasised the potential for arts participation to empower and motivate people 'to want to take part' in democratic processes - an idea that was closely aligned with New Labour's governance agenda.<sup>83</sup> The value of participation within arts projects (as well as sporting activities) in tackling social exclusion subsequently became the subject of a number of reports from within government departments.<sup>84</sup> The political enthusiasm for value of the arts in the context of urban regeneration was further reinforced by a number of publications and research by Arts Council England and other regional arts organisations, all of which

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<sup>77</sup> Research Interview with Simon Ogden, City Development Manager, Sheffield City Council.

<sup>78</sup> Hawkins, p. 6.

<sup>79</sup> Lees and Melhuish, p. 11.

<sup>80</sup> François Matarasso, 'Use or Ornament? The Social Impact of Participation in the Arts' (Comedia Publishing Group, 1997) <<http://www.demandingconversations.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/Use-or-Ornament.pdf>> [accessed 12 August 2013].

<sup>81</sup> Matarasso.

<sup>82</sup> Matarasso.

<sup>83</sup> Lees and Melhuish, p. 9.

<sup>84</sup> ODPM / DCLG; DCMS, *Understanding the Value of Engagement in Culture and Sport/CASE: Culture and Sport Evidence Programme.*, July 2010; ODPM, *Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future* (London: ODPM, 2003)

<<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20060502043818/http://odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1163452>> [accessed 19 November 2013].

served to highlight the contribution of the visual and performing arts in helping to tackle social exclusion.<sup>85</sup> New Labour embarked on a policy of promoting the value of the arts as tools to deliver “real socio-economic benefits to people and communities”.<sup>86</sup> The instrumental role of the arts, therefore, came to be embedded as a 'quasi social' fact.<sup>87</sup>

### 4.3 Participatory practices and the social site

Before continuing to discuss the contested issues that have resulted in the instrumentalisation of the arts and performance in community cohesion, it is important to take a step back and describe the emergence of ‘participatory’ or ‘socially-engaged’ forms of practice. Although wide-ranging in scope, this form of practice broadly describes artworks that are integrated within a social site, with local communities and individuals invited in to participate or collaborate in the processes of production and reception.<sup>88</sup>

#### 4.3.1 The diversification of site in site-specific practice

Closely bound up in the shift towards site-specificity in performance theory and practice is a diversification or expansion of ‘site’ beyond physical location. Chapter 2 introduced some of the recent history of site-specific art and performance, and a relationship between artwork and site that was previously conceived in terms of a physical inextricability. The fact that the artwork could only be completed by the physical presence of the viewer on site was seen as a form of resistance to the market economy and the commodification of art.<sup>89</sup> As new art practices developed, site-specificity became less reliant on a fixed physical relationship and explored greater use of anti-visual techniques and live performance. While on the one hand this shift could be seen as further resistance to commodification, the de-coupling the artwork from the physical site was intertwined with a greater engagement with social and political activism, particularly in the North American context of New Genre Public Art (NGPA).<sup>90</sup> NGPA is a term used by Lacy to make a distinction between art in public places (typically sculpture) and ‘community orientated’, ‘socially engaged’, or ‘participatory’ forms of art practice.<sup>91</sup> Lacy describes how, following the influence of Kaprow’s Happenings, a number of ecological and social crises (gay rights, racial tension, environmental issues,

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<sup>85</sup> Arts Council England, ‘The Power of Art. Visual Arts: Evidence of Impact, Regeneration, Health, Education and Learning.’ (Arts Council England, 2006) <<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/documents/publications/phpTpuDh1.pdf>> [accessed 2 December 2011].

<sup>86</sup> Matarasso, p. vi.

<sup>87</sup> Lees and Melhuish, p. 1.

<sup>88</sup> Hawkins, p. 5.

<sup>89</sup> Kwon, *One Place after Another*, p. 12.

<sup>90</sup> S. Lacy, *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art* (Seattle, WA.: Bay Press, 1995), p. 25.

<sup>91</sup> Lacy, p. 19.

and abortion) acted as a 'call to rights' for American artists to become engaged in social activism and public spaces.<sup>92</sup>

Contemporary 'participatory' arts practices have developed from NGPA and the community arts traditions. This is less of an established art movement than a general desire or inclination for artists and performance-makers to engage with the everyday - integrating art into social activist efforts or as an expanded public engagement with the world outside of the gallery or theatre.<sup>93</sup> In terms of site-specificity, the physical environment (such as a canal in Sheffield or housing estate in Anfield) may play an important role, but only represents one dimension of the 'site'. A greater significance is placed on the 'social site', which includes both the community (or communities) and the wider social and political relations that underpin the connection between people and place.<sup>94</sup> The social trajectory of site-specific art and performance thus becomes aligned with the post-studio or 'relational' trends in art-making, which has been more widely described as the social or participatory turn.<sup>95</sup> A frequently cited aim of participatory artists and performance-makers is to produce work whose meaning is so embedded within a place, that 'it could not be imagined belonging anywhere else'; something Kwon refers to as a social integration rather than physical integration.<sup>96</sup> In this sense, the artist's assimilation into a community (building up a network of trust) might be thought of as analogous to the artwork's integration with the (social) site. This integration or specificity is developed or 'accrued' through the time spent in building relationships and trust.<sup>97</sup> This ethnographic-like process of becoming assimilated into a community has been likened to a performance in itself.

The turn towards performance or 'non-object' making brings to light new questions of what art 'is' and 'does', who else is involved beyond the artist(s) or performance-maker, and how the work might be presented or documented.<sup>98</sup> These issues were made even more complex during the 1990s, a decade marked by the surge of interest in inviting others into the processes of production and reception.<sup>99</sup> The invitation of community members within participatory practice opens up the possibility of multiple interpretations (rather than 'singular' unified, culturally educated audience) and the potential for disagreement between and within communities. Lacy argues that these are important issues that not be shied away from, and that this highlights the importance of critical role

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<sup>92</sup> Lacy, p. 29; Miwon Kwon, *One Place after Another*, p. 12.

<sup>93</sup> Kwon, p. 24; Kester, p. 9.

<sup>94</sup> Hawkins, p. 5.

<sup>95</sup> Bishop, p. 2.

<sup>96</sup> Kwon, *One Place after Another*, p. 95.

<sup>97</sup> Kwon, *One Place after Another*, p. 95.

<sup>98</sup> Hawkins, p. 5.

<sup>99</sup> Bishop, p. 1.



that participatory art and performance can play in articulating these conflicts.<sup>100</sup> The shift towards participation and collaboration is a global phenomenon and incorporates a huge variety of modes of expression, levels of participation and political convictions. The range of practice might include: performance-makers delegating roles to spectators, interactive projects created by the actions of participants, traditional visual art forms (such as painting or tapestry) created by local community groups, or participatory practitioners addressing local political issues around contested public spaces. The aim is not just to redefine what art 'is', but to redefine the traditional relationship between artist, audience and art object.<sup>101</sup> Bishop neatly sums up the three key aspects of this redefinition:<sup>102</sup>

- Instead of producing discrete (saleable) objects, the artist is recast as a collaborator or producer of *situations*.
- Finite objects or products are reconceived as long-term *projects* often with unclear endpoints.
- Audiences or spectators are 'repositioned' as co-producers or participants.

Theorists have struggled to find new terms and frameworks to describe both the breadth and complexity of projects that have emerged from the turn towards the social site. In the 1990s, curator Nicolas Bourriand coined the term 'relational art' to draw together the wide range of forms and projects that were centred on the production of inter-human relations rather than the more traditional production of art objects.<sup>103</sup> Bourriand cites a wide range of late 20<sup>th</sup> century examples as examples of the relational aesthetic, including Philippe Parreno's parties, Lincoln Tobier's radio station, the restaurant run by Gordon Matta-Clark and Carol Goodden, and Douglas Gordon's 'List of Names'. What unites these diverse practices is that they require the participation of others within the artwork, yet the transient nature of this participation means that these works still remain 'forever unfinished'.<sup>104</sup> Despite the efforts of Bourriand, the complexity and breadth of the examples referenced has divided critics along a fault-line between aesthetics and politics. The aesthetic impulse implied by Bourriand's terms is rejected by Kester and Bishop, who argue that his predominantly visual analysis fails to appreciate the vital political dimensions of participatory projects and practices.<sup>105</sup> Kester is open about the need to move away from conventional

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<sup>100</sup> Lacy, p. 39.

<sup>101</sup> Bishop, p. 2.

<sup>102</sup> Bishop, p. 2.

<sup>103</sup> Nicolas Bourriand, *Relational Aesthetics*, trans. by Simon Pleasance, Fronza Woods, and Mathieu Copeland (Dijon: Les presses du réel, 2002), p. 112.

<sup>104</sup> Bourriand, p. 26.

<sup>105</sup> Bishop, p. 2.

methodologies of art criticism - he admits that his analysis places much greater importance on the social processes and dialogical interactions that result from these works than the visual or sensory experience. Kester offers the term 'dialogic' art (after Bakhtin) to describe this critical framework. Unlike object-based art, Kester suggests that dialogic art projects "unfold through a process of performative interaction", creating sustained relations with a specific community over a long period of time.<sup>106</sup> Artist Jeanne van Heeswijk, initiator of a number of participatory and activist projects, also describes the significance of the temporal dimension of this form of practice and the nature of these 'situations' as ongoing processes. While these situations may be ongoing and not necessarily recognisable as artworks themselves, van Heeswijk describes how they might also be represented to the public at certain moments or slices as 'temporary outputs'. The form of these outputs may be as a publication, an exhibition or a theatrical performance, but may only represent one dimension and one moment of a longer-term *project*.<sup>107</sup>

'Socially-engaged', 'participatory', 'relational' or 'dialogic' art are just a few of a number of different terms that have been put forward by critics, commentators and practitioners to describe this form of practice. As was demonstrated in the discussion around term 'site-specific', the adoption of new terminologies can underpin a wider critical discussion. Both Bishop and Jackson have critiqued the emergence of the term 'socially engaged' in particular, questioning whether this type of practice is new at all, and what distinguishes them from all other practice (as everything engages with the social on some level).<sup>108</sup> Jackson has also argued that participatory practice is often used as an automatic signifier for progressivity, despite that fact that it encompasses a wide range of methods, social objectives and ideas of 'community'.<sup>109</sup> This issue is picked up by Kwon, who asserts that the claims made of and for this type community or socially-engaged art practice demand 'extensive critical analysis'.<sup>110</sup> Other commonly used terms such as 'community-based art' have attracted criticism for their association with the (often empty) political promise of community.<sup>111</sup> This is part of wider issue is raised by a number of critics regarding the rhetorical use of 'participation', and the way in which it is applied to encompass many different aesthetic, artistic and political goals. Just as in architecture, urban planning and party politics, the claims made by and on behalf of 'participatory' practices may be out of step with the reality.

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<sup>106</sup> Kester, p. 10.

<sup>107</sup> Artist Jeanne van Heeswijk also uses the term 'situations' to describe her participatory practice, 'PhD Research Interview with the Creator of Homebaked / Anfield Home Tour', 2013.

<sup>108</sup> Jackson, p. 18.

<sup>109</sup> Jackson, p. 14.

<sup>110</sup> Kwon, *One Place after Another*, p. 93.

<sup>111</sup> Dave Beech, 'Include Me out! Dave Beech on Participation in Art', *Art Monthly*, 315 (2008).

While keeping these issues in mind, it is important that the discussions in this chapter do not become bogged down in terminologies. For the purposes of this thesis it is also necessary to adopt a term that enables greater dialogue between the fields of art, performance studies, architecture and urban planning. Therefore I will follow Bishop's definition of the term 'participatory' to describe the practices (and the accompanying conceptual frameworks) that invite others to become involved in performing and performance-making in contested urban sites.

#### 4.3.2 Questioning the value of the participatory arts in social regeneration

Discussions around terminologies and the contested nature of participatory arts practice begin to put the 'landscape of rhetoric' around community participation into a critical context. A range of more recent academic and policy reviews have reflected more critically on the relationship between government policy and artistic practice. Several authors have highlighted the wider political and ethical issues associated with the instrumentalisation of participatory forms of art and performance. Hal Foster raises concerns over the exploitation of practitioners by institutions seeking to expand operations in social out-reach, public relations, and economic development.<sup>112</sup> Meanwhile, Leeson has argued that the deployment of art and performance projects in marginalised communities can represent part of a cost-cutting agenda, with local authorities deploying artists and performance-makers in the place of properly funded community development work and social infrastructure.<sup>113</sup> This concern is brought in sharper focus by Chapple and Jackson, who highlight the low wages and poor security generally afforded to artists and performance-makers, and the paradox of asking a vulnerable (underpaid) sector to help solve complex urban problems within the most vulnerable sections of society.<sup>114</sup> Miles and other authors have raised wider concerns that any positive value brought about through arts participation is overshadowed by the wider economic forces that underpin social exclusion and, moreover, the 'soft' policy approach of arts participation may even serve in a complicit role to distract from the larger economic disparities in society and the social injustices that have been associated with the processes of deindustrialisation, gentrification and urban renewal.<sup>115</sup>

Studies have also reported on the local tensions that can be unearthed through the process of participation in arts projects linked to urban regeneration.<sup>116</sup> Such tensions may arise when previously marginalised groups are given a voice through their participation within arts or

<sup>112</sup> Foster, 'The Artist as Ethnographer'.

<sup>113</sup> Lorraine Leeson, 'Art with Communities: Reflections on a Changing Landscape' (ixia, 2008), p. unpaginated <<http://ixia-info.com/new-writing/loraineleeson/>>.

<sup>114</sup> Chapple and Jackson, p. 483.

<sup>115</sup> Paola Merli, 'Evaluating the Social Impact of Participation in Arts Activities', *International journal of cultural policy*, 8 (2002), 107–18 (p. 113); Miles, *Art, Space and the City: Public Art and Urban Futures*, pp. 130–131.

<sup>116</sup> DCMS.

performance projects. While participatory practice may also be viewed by policy makers as a tool for mediating these conflicts, Vaughan-Williams warns that competing visions of place or community or resistance to change may become lost.<sup>117</sup> Vaughan-Williams argues for the vital role of art and performance in articulating the complexities and contradictions inherent in regeneration but often masked by positive rhetoric.<sup>118</sup> Critics such as Lacy have also argued for the role of participatory art in recognising and exploring difference, rather than attempting to affirm or produce consensus around urban redevelopment.<sup>119</sup> However in many cases, project commissions tied to urban regeneration initiatives can become a 'double edged sword' for practitioners, with an expectation that artworks or performances demonstrate instrumental benefits, and should do so in a way that avoids destabilising the status quo or criticising politicians, funders, or policy makers.<sup>120</sup>

#### 4.3.3 Evaluation and measurement of impacts

The 'social turn' in art and performance-making has seen practices become engaged with issues and concepts (such as community, society, regeneration, and urban development) that have been typically associated with the social policy or the social sciences. This has required practitioners, critics, and scholars to open up to new methodologies and tools to better understand these participatory forms of practice. The shift towards new methodological frameworks is neatly summed up by Bishop, who argues that art and performance that engages with real urban sites and real communities 'demands a methodological reading that is in part sociological'.<sup>121</sup>

Since their expansion under New Labour, planning and regeneration policies have placed greater attention on the measurable impacts of participation in art and performance events. Government justification for expanding centralised funding for the arts through Arts Council England (ACE) and other regional bodies has been linked back to evidence of greater audience figures, increased participation, and other socio-economic benefits.<sup>122</sup> Government-funded studies such as Evans and Shaw's 2004 report for the DCMS have attempted to collate the existing research on the impacts of arts-led regeneration projects.

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<sup>117</sup> Vaughan Williams, p. 225.

<sup>118</sup> Vaughan Williams, p. 225.

<sup>119</sup> Vaughan Williams.

<sup>120</sup> Lees and Melhuish, p. 10.

<sup>121</sup> Bishop, p. 7.

<sup>122</sup> Bishop, p. 13.

While highlighting the significant gaps and weaknesses of existing methodologies, their work has drawn together eleven indicators for evidencing the contribution of arts and culture to what they term 'social regeneration':<sup>123</sup>

- *a change in residents' perceptions of the place where they live*
- *greater individual confidence and aspiration*
- *a clearer expression of individual and shared ideas and needs*
- *an increase in volunteering*
- *increased organisational capacity at local level*
- *increased social capital ('the norms and networks that enable collective action')* <sup>124</sup>
- *a change in the image or reputation of a place or group of people*
- *stronger public-private-voluntary sector partnerships*
- *reduced school truancy/offending behaviour*
- *higher educational attainment*

Despite these efforts to establish a framework for evaluation of existing projects, significant criticism has been directed towards the existing evidence base for the social benefit of participatory arts practice. Lees and Melhuish's review of recent evidence argues that, despite the raft of policy measures and positive reports, there is little or no substantive 'material evidence' to support the value of the arts in relation to community cohesion and learning.<sup>125</sup> Matarasso's influential 1997 report has come under particular scrutiny, with the methodology used to 'measure' the various impacts attributed to participation in arts projects disparaged by several critics as both vague and relying on poorly structured survey data.<sup>126</sup> The weak evidence base and the need for further research into the social benefits of arts participation and attendance were also recognised in subsequent government reports.<sup>127</sup> Critics have suggested that where empirical data is collected, it is often used to say little beyond satisfying the requirements of funding bodies or documenting

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<sup>123</sup> Graeme Evans and Phyllida Shaw, 'The Contribution of Culture to Regeneration in The UK: A Report to the DCMS' (London Met University, 2004), p. 28  
<<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.120.4961&rep=rep1&type=pdf>> [accessed 30 October 2013].

<sup>124</sup> World Bank, 'What Is Social Capital?'  
<[http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/EXTSOCIALCAPITAL/0,,contentMDK:20185164~menuPK:418217~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:401015,00.html#what\\_is\\_social\\_capital](http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/EXTSOCIALCAPITAL/0,,contentMDK:20185164~menuPK:418217~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:401015,00.html#what_is_social_capital)> [accessed 5 July 2014].

<sup>125</sup> Lees and Melhuish, p. 2.

<sup>126</sup> Eleonora Belfiore, 'Art as a Means of Alleviating Social Exclusion: Does It Really Work? A Critique of Instrumental Cultural Policies and Social Impact Studies in the UK', *International journal of cultural policy*, 8 (2002), 91–106; Merli.

<sup>127</sup> DCMS; Evans and Shaw, 'The Contribution of Culture to Regeneration in The UK: A Report to the DCMS'.

audience numbers or for the purposes of furthering broader political goals.<sup>128</sup> Bishop argues that practitioners must be scrutinised for the tendency to assume levels of impact and extrapolate positive feedback from individual participants. Arts Council reports (such as 'The Power of Art') have been highlighted as failing to provide a thorough account of methodology or evidence-based approach, and have relied too heavily on hand-picked positive quotations from participants.<sup>129</sup>

The methodological debates around the evaluation of the experience of an artwork or performance are ongoing and passionately contested. These debates get to the heart of entrenched epistemological positions and the way in which subjective/ interpretative forms of knowledge produced by performance scholars and practitioners are valued. One commonly-cited issue is the resistance of artists and performance-makers to methods of evaluation. Studies have shown that evaluation has often been perceived by practitioners and organisations to be expensive, unhelpful, or even a bureaucratic intrusion on the creative process.<sup>130</sup> Other critics have argued that existing evaluation methods simply fail address the multiple levels at which an artwork or performance impacts on its audience.<sup>131</sup> Much of this complexity relates to the long-term and multi-faceted nature of participatory art and performance practices and the particular difficulty in verifying a causal relationship between arts participation and 'social impact' amidst complex and changing individual social lives.<sup>132</sup> Evans and Shaw also highlight the scarcity of research available on the impact of attending or watching (as opposed to more hands-on engagement). Gilmore identifies a similar issue in recent attempts to evaluate the impact of the 2012 Cultural Olympiad programme in the North West of England, suggesting that evaluation is often limited to market research-style surveys, as well as counting eyeballs (the numbers of visitors who could see a screen) and web clicks.<sup>133</sup> Other arts organisations such as *ixia* have subsequently attempted to provide a framework for more in-depth evaluation of the impacts of participatory projects, adopting concepts from project management models.<sup>134</sup> In the field of reception studies, scholars such as Matthew Reason have highlighted the difficulties in asking research participants to articulate the 'elusive' affective

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<sup>128</sup> Abigail Gilmore, 'Counting Eyeballs, Soundbites and "plings": Arts Participation, Strategic Instrumentalism and the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad', *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 18 (2012), 151–67 (p. 165) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2011.577283>>.

<sup>129</sup> Arts Council England, 'The Power of Art. Visual Arts: Evidence of Impact, Regeneration, Health, Education and Learning.'

<sup>130</sup> Evans and Shaw, 'The Contribution of Culture to Regeneration in The UK: A Report to the DCMS', p. 59.

<sup>131</sup> Lacy, p. 45; Emma Cocker, 'Performing Space (Differently)' (presented at the SSSoA Research by Design Seminar Series, University of Sheffield, School of Architecture, 2011).

<sup>132</sup> Evans and Shaw, 'The Contribution of Culture to Regeneration in The UK: A Report to the DCMS', pp. 28–29.

<sup>133</sup> Gilmore, pp. 160–162.

<sup>134</sup> *ixia*, 'Public Art: A Guide to Evaluation', 2013 <<http://ixia-info.com/files/2009/01/Public-Art-A-Guide-to-Evaluation-3rd-Edition-March-2013-edit7-FV.pdf>> [accessed 28 October 2013].

qualities of performance.<sup>135</sup> Cultural theorists have developed an increasingly sophisticated array of techniques to gauge reception of an artwork. These techniques are designed to factor in issues such as change in interpretation over time, responses through means other than verbal, cross-reference of other popular culture, and the degree to which interpretation depends on shared codes and frames of reference within interpretive communities.<sup>136</sup> Lacy's writing has also discussed the 'site of evaluation' of participatory arts practice, suggesting that the experience and meaning-making process by participants or other spectators cannot be carried out by 'direct inquiry' (such as interviews or surveys).<sup>137</sup>

Failure to demonstrate measurable social impacts of the arts has been, in part, methodological; with several studies highlighting the difficulty of developing suitable in-depth methodologies to study the complex and long-term impacts of engaging with an arts or performance project.<sup>138</sup> Subsequent recommendations to improve this evidence base have included more in-depth qualitative studies, longer-term ethnographic engagements within projects, more collaborative research with practitioners, and a greater focus on interdisciplinary approaches.<sup>139</sup> Lacy also places importance on practitioner interviews, with the suggestion that any judgement of the social or political claims of site-specific or participatory artistic practice requires detailed knowledge of the artist's political intentions.<sup>140</sup> As Bishop warns, if more nuanced methodological measures cannot be found, practitioners and theorists risk being overrun by positivist and quantitative methodologies, which (despite attempts by policy think-tanks to prove 'demonstrable outcomes') are 'inadequate' for the purposes of understanding and theorising performance.<sup>141</sup> Other authors have advised against an outright resistance to empirical data collection, arguing that developing an evidence base is crucial if the community arts are to maintain support through government funding.<sup>142</sup>

While the use of ethnographic methods, interviews, and participant observation may be becoming more commonplace, epistemological and methodological tensions in participatory arts practice continue to be identified.<sup>143</sup> These tensions are rooted in the underlying conflict between social claims (art and performance as having social impact) and critical goals (art and performance

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<sup>135</sup> Matthew Reason, 'Watching Dance, Drawing the Experience and Visual Knowledge', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 46 (2010), 391–414 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/fmls/cqq014>>.

<sup>136</sup> Chapple and Jackson, pp. 482–483.

<sup>137</sup> Lacy, p. 45.

<sup>138</sup> Evans and Shaw, 'The Contribution of Culture to Regeneration in The UK: A Report to the DCMS', pp. 28–29.

<sup>139</sup> Lees and Melhuish, p. 15.

<sup>140</sup> Lacy, p. 45.

<sup>141</sup> Bishop, p. 18.

<sup>142</sup> Lees and Melhuish, p. 15.

<sup>143</sup> Lacy, p. 45.

remaining its critically and aesthetically independent). Chappelle and Jackson summarise the challenging situation facing practitioners by suggesting that:

*"Artists and art organisers vacillate between promoting the social value of the arts and worrying that such aesthetic instrumentalisation will neutralize the power of art to provoke its audiences and to generate unexpected connections."*<sup>144</sup>

#### 4.4 Arts-led participation in 'The Big Society'

Following the formation of the Coalition government in 2010, the rhetoric and policy around the relationship between government and local communities altered significantly. In policy terms, a central tenet of the Coalition reforms is the Conservative idea of 'Big Society', which promises to support communities and give them greater power to shape their future. In England, the impact of this new agenda on participation in planning and urbanism is being delivered through the flagship reform of localism, a voluntary and partial decentralisation of planning powers to communities or neighbourhoods.<sup>145</sup> Under the Localism Act 2011, Neighbourhood Plans (NPs) have become the key mechanism, with the aim of drawing a wider cross-section of the population into the in-depth and detailed process of making local planning decisions. While it may be too early to judge the long-term impacts of the Localism agenda and neighbourhood planning, critics have already condemned the 'Big Society' as part of a political ideology to substantially reduce the budgets of local authorities, with the knock-on effect of reducing budgets for local services and community initiatives. In the context of the arts, the Coalition's deficit reduction proposals have already had a severe impact on funding. Recent cutbacks to Arts Council England represent a cut of almost 30% of their annual budget, with further 'austerity measures' planned during the next parliament.<sup>146</sup> Local arts organisations have also been affected by the knock-on effects of cuts to local government budgets, with the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) reporting continued cuts in Local Authority spending on arts and culture.<sup>147</sup> As public spending cuts come into effect across all levels of UK and local government, Melhuish and Lees suggest that the 'golden era' of

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<sup>144</sup> Chapple and Jackson, p. 481.

<sup>145</sup> Nancy Holman and Yvonne Rydin, 'What Can Social Capital Tell Us About Planning Under Localism?', *Local Government Studies*, 39 (2013), 71–88 (p. 72).

<sup>146</sup> Arts Council England, 'Investment in Arts and Culture 2012-15', *Arts Council*, 2013  
<<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/our-investment/investment-in-the-arts-2012-15/>> [accessed 29 August 2013].

<sup>147</sup> Alistair Smith, 'Arts Face £124m Extra Local Funding Cuts', *The Stage*, 8 August 2013  
<<http://www.thestage.co.uk/news/2013/08/arts-face-124m-extra-local-funding-cuts/>> [accessed 12 September 2013].



state-promoted investment in participatory art and performance projects (including those as a component of urban regeneration) may be over.<sup>148</sup>

#### 4.5 Summary

Whether in arts practice or urban regeneration, the terms ‘community’ and ‘participation’ are used to describe a broad range of concepts, many of which are highly politicised and a far cry from the democratic principles advocated by Rousseau and others. Within the processes of planning, designing and regenerating contested urban environments, the notion of community participation is still dogged by a number of ongoing issues:

- A tendency to apply simplified models that assume that more participation is always better, particularly given the fact that many of the processes involved in the planning and design of the built environment are not suited to citizen control.<sup>149</sup>
- A struggle to balance local and centralised agendas, despite attempts to devolve powers to local communities and their representatives.
- An ongoing search for ‘innovative’ methods to widen representation, reach out to marginalised groups and look beyond the ‘usual suspects’ (individuals and organised groups with greater resources and social capital), and increase ‘early participation’ (before major decisions have been agreed).<sup>150</sup>
- A push for accountability in public and non-profit sectors, placing ever-greater importance on measurable outcomes, including the impacts of ‘soft’ forms of participation such as participatory arts practices.

Turning towards the particular role of arts participation within the processes that shape the built environment, the chapter has highlighted a number of further issues. Chapple and Jackson summarise the recent relationship between the arts and urban planning/ design as one of a ‘productive struggle’ between two competing visions. The first of these views the arts as a government-funded vehicle (or ‘instrument’) for social cohesion and community development. An alternative view casts the arts as a critical vehicle to challenge existing social and political practices and offer alternative visions of ‘community’.<sup>151</sup> These two conceptions of arts participation can be

<sup>148</sup> Lees and Melhuish, p. 1.

<sup>149</sup> Till, ‘The Negotiation of Hope’, p. 26.

<sup>150</sup> Development Services, Sheffield City Council, ‘Statement of Community Involvement’ (Sheffield City Council, 2006), p. 6 <<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/planning-and-city-development/planning-documents/local-plan/statement-of-community-involvement.html>> [accessed 22 August 2013].

<sup>151</sup> Karen Chapple and Shannon Jackson, ‘Commentary: Arts, Neighborhoods, and Social Practices: Towards an Integrated Epistemology of Community Arts’, *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 29 (2010), 478–490

correlated with the critical distinctions between 'instrumental' and 'transformative' forms participation identified by Wisner and others (after Kruks).<sup>152</sup> However, each of these two visions has faced challenges from different critical perspectives.

'Instrumental participation' is used to describe modes of participation originated by external agencies such as social policy-makers in local or national governments. This approach might also be identified in urban planning and regeneration. Wisner and others define an instrumental approach as one initiated by bureaucratic and other institutions to achieve predetermined social, economic, or political objectives by mobilising local labour or support.<sup>153</sup> Advocates may view instrumental participation as an effective approach to the decision-making process that enables wider political or economic priorities to be carried out. However, this approach has attracted widespread criticism from those who argue that they are mechanisms for supporting and expanding dominant power structures. Rather than empowering people, it has been argued that instrumental forms of participation may actually suppress the agency of local people to determine the future of their city or neighbourhood.

If people feel that they are being manipulated or having development imposed on their community, an instrumental approach may result in the emergence of self-organised modes of participation - expressed through individual or collective protest actions. These actions might be thought of as one form of 'transformative participation' - participation 'initiated locally as part of an ongoing struggle by people to control their lives'.<sup>154</sup> A transformative approach might also be identified in the activist practices of performance-makers, architects, and spatial practitioners, including such as Jeanne van Heeswijk, Stealth.unlimited, public works, and Raumlabor.<sup>155</sup> Advocates view this critical form of participation as changing social consciousness and (ultimately) challenging the structural inequalities in wealth and power. While contemporary site-specific projects may make a critical stand against established top-down politics, Bishop has suggested that this places enormous pressure onto to artists to devise alternative social or political models.<sup>156</sup> For example, some have questioned the role of participatory arts practice in the face of the 'hard bits' of regeneration, such as social alienation,

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(p. 480). See also Rosalyn Deutsche, *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics* (Cambridge, Mass. ; London: MIT Press, 1998); Miwon Kwon, *One Place after Another : Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge, Mass. ; London: MIT Press, 2002); S. Lacy, *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art* (Seattle, WA.: Bay Press, 1995).

<sup>152</sup> Ben Wisner, David Stea and Sonia Kruks, 'Participatory and Action Research Methods', in *Advances in Environment, Behavior, and Design - Volume 3*, ed. by Ervin H. Zube and Gary T. Moore (New York ; London: Plenum Press, 1991), pp. 271-95 (p. 276).

<sup>153</sup> Wisner, Stea and Kruks, p. 276.

<sup>154</sup> Wisner, Stea and Kruks, p. 276.

<sup>155</sup> See Appendix 1 for a range of example projects.

<sup>156</sup> Bishop, pp. 283-284.

drug addiction, or poverty.<sup>157</sup> If the end goal is real social change, at a certain point artists and performance-makers have to work out how to hand over to (or operate in partnership with) other institutions, community groups, or governance structures. As Bishop argues - 'it is not enough to keep producing activist art'.<sup>158</sup>

Finally, it is important to set these discussions within the broader political and funding context in the UK. Both practitioners and researchers are perhaps caught between criticising the instrumentalisation of arts participation enacted under New Labour, whilst also struggling to find a new language to respond to the challenge of widespread austerity and cuts across the arts sector.

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<sup>157</sup> Vaughan Williams, p. 222.

<sup>158</sup> Bishop, p. 283.



## 5 Methodology: Research *on* and *with* site-specific performance practices

### 5.0 Introduction

As the introduction and literature review sections of the thesis have explored in some detail, the expansion of performance, site-specific and participatory practices have attracted interest from a wide range of practitioners, researchers, and critics. This reflects the nature of both architecture and performance as incorporating a range of perspectives, theories, and concepts.<sup>1</sup> Alongside recent developments in the field of performance studies, the turn towards the site and the social in art practice has attracted attention across urban and spatial research disciplines. The wide range of disciplinary writing on this subject makes for a complex and often confusing research base, with competing and seemingly incompatible epistemological and methodological priorities.

This chapter is structured in three distinct sections. Having covered a range of key theoretical issues from literature on theories of site-specific performance, 'performative' cartographies, and participatory forms of performance, the first section (5.1) turns towards the heterogeneous range of 'practice models' from theatre, performance art, technological arts, media arts and gaming that navigate, negotiate or 'map' the urban fabric. This is followed by a discussion of the key paradigmatic issues that have arisen within this thesis. The third section (5.3) presents an overview of the methodology for the empirical research on two recent site-specific performances (chapters 6 and 7). Additional details such as case study selection, positioning, ethics, and research methods are located in appendix 2. The closing section (5.4) deals with the revision of the research methodology and adoption of a collaborative approach for the empirical research in relation to the third case study (chapter 8).

### 5.1 A spatial taxonomy of site-specific performance practice

In responding to a set of particular local spatial, temporal, and social conditions, site-specific performance represents a distinctive yet diverse form of practice. The taxonomy builds on the work of a number of other authors who have logged, categorised or theorised the array of site-specific performance practices. These include Mike Pearson's models (eg. *'they go there, you and I do not'*), Fiona Wilkie's survey of site-specific practice, Conor McGarrigle's taxonomy of locative media arts, and Cathy Turner's *'Dramaturgies of Public Space'*.<sup>2</sup> Beyond these forms of categorisation, a number

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<sup>1</sup> 'Performance Studies', in *The SAGE Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry*, ed. by Thomas A. Schwandt, 3rd edn (Thousand Oaks, CA. ; London: Sage Publications, 2007), p. 225.

<sup>2</sup> Turner; Pearson, pp. 23–24; McGarrigle, 'The Construction of Locative Situations: The Production of Agency in Locative Media Art Practice', p. 28.

of other terms and descriptions have been invented by performance-makers to describe their own practice in academic writing or marketing material.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps because of this, practitioners that operate across a number of these fields (such as Invisible Flock and Blast Theory) appear to invent novel terms and definitions for each new event. Within the closely related field of pervasive gaming, the emerging and cross-disciplinary nature of these modes of performance (which often contain elements of performance, live art, gaming and media or sound art) means that widely recognised genres or descriptions have yet to be established by practitioners, curators or marketing agencies.<sup>4</sup> Gardner has raised a similar issue in relation to contemporary theatre practitioners.<sup>5</sup> Across performance-making, pervasive gaming, and participatory art practice, a number of different labels are used to describe practices and projects that share a great deal in common in terms of interaction between the participants, performers and the site.

Why carry out this exercise when many of the practitioners cited create works that easily (and deliberately) slip between formal genres or disciplines? The taxonomy set out in this chapter is not an attempt to establish a definitive set of terms to describe and classify the broad range of site-specific practices, but a way of applying the expanded concept of dramaturgy (following Turner) to loosely group different models of practice in terms of the relationships they create between participants, performers and the site. The taxonomy makes particular reference to the models used by Mike Pearson to further explore the various manifestations of site-specific performance. Through the use of pronouns (e.g. *'They go there, you and I do not'*), Pearson's models frame site-specific performance primarily in terms of the relationship between people and place.<sup>6</sup> Avoiding the use of theatrical conventions such as 'actor' or 'audience', the ambiguity of these terms deliberately provokes questions of who is the performing and aims to move the discussion beyond the notion that a (site-specific) 'performance' requires the presence of both live performer and spectator-participant in the site.

This exercise also sets the scene for the subsequent three case-study chapters, each of which elucidates one of the six different practice model from the taxonomy (5.1.2 / 5.1.3 / 5.1.4). The other three models (5.1.1 / 5.1.5 / 5.1.6) are described in less detail. Although relevant to the broader discussion of site-specificity and performance, these are less significant in terms the scope

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix 1 (directory of site-specific practice)

<sup>4</sup> Montola, Stenros and Wærn, p. 40.

<sup>5</sup> Lyn Gardner, 'Coming to Terms: Do We Need New Names for Alternative Theatre', *The Guardian*, 27 November 2013 <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/stage/theatreblog/2013/nov/27/alternative-theatre-new-names?>> [accessed 29 November 2013].

<sup>6</sup> Pearson, p. 20.

of the empirical case study research. Further details and references for the individual projects and practitioners is provided in appendix 1 (directory of site-specific performance).

### 5.1.1 Performer(s) only: Looking, listening, and leaving traces

*Example practices: Tehching Hsieh, Francis Alÿs (pictured), Robert Smithson, Situationist International, Lone Twin, Ilya Noe (Co-mapping).*



This first model of practice examples has had (and continues to have) an enduring impact on the way we understand walking as a mode of critical practice - a subject that was explored in greater detail in chapter 3. Its seemingly simple structure is described by Pearson's notion that '*I go there, you and they do not*', referring to the solo artist as a walker (Richard Long), as a wayfarer (Tim Ingold), as a flâneur or dérivist (Guy Debord), as a nomad (Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari), or as a Rambler (Jane Rendell).<sup>7</sup> Highlighting Pearson's ongoing interest in the link between performance and other research disciplines, he also describes projects where the performer plays the role of 'field-worker' - mapping the site alongside fellow performance practitioners or other (scientific) researchers. Drawing upon these roles, Emma Cocker describes the way in which solo practitioners might explore marginal places or 'elsewheres' through the marginal ('guileful') practices of drifting and wandering.<sup>8</sup>

The apparent absence of the spectator or public participant within this model immediately challenges the conventional definitions of live performance. While the performer or artist's relationship to the site is first-hand and immersive, the spectator's experience of the performance or site is often only a second-hand or mediated through documentation. Documents might include recorded evidence, sounds, artefacts, or stories. Kwon employs the term 'discursive site' to describe the way in which documentary material can 'displace' the site to another location ('the site of reception') in this form of practice.<sup>9</sup> In the case of Robert Smithson's 'Non-sites' this displacement

<sup>7</sup> Pearson, pp. 20–21.

<sup>8</sup> Emma Cocker, *Manual for Marginal Places* (Close and Remote, 2011).

<sup>9</sup> Kwon, *One Place after Another*, p. 29.

was literal, with material transplanted from the site to the gallery.<sup>10</sup> This notion of the discursive site has been viewed as a further expansion of the concept of site-specificity, with particular implications for the ongoing debate around liveness and documentation.<sup>11</sup>

### 5.1.2 Participants only: Looking, listening, and leaving traces

*Example practices: Wrights and Sites (various), Graeme Miller (LINKED), Janet Cardiff, Blast Theory (various including 'Fixing Point', pictured), Invisible Flock (various), Rimini Protokoll (50 Kilometres of Files)*



Walking is also a defining characteristic of the second model of practice. However in contrast to the 'performers only' model (5.1.1), this form of site-specific practice is constructed around the participant's first-hand presence within the site (note the active role of 'participant' beyond that of 'spectator' or 'witness'). The relationship between participant(s) and site might be mediated by a set of instructions (audio or textual) that determine a particular route or propose a particular set of activities. Alternatively, there might be a deliberate decision on the part of the artist or performance-maker to 'say little' beyond arranging access to the site and letting the participant shape their own experience.<sup>12</sup> Scenographer Alison Oddey describes how this type of performance opens up the 'autobiographical space' of the spectator for them to 'imbibe' the 'history, memories, imagery and soundscape' of the site<sup>13</sup>. There is a strong temporality to the act of walking in particular – evoking past associations, present existence and future life. The 'solid, stable, secure' and 'seemingly unmoving' city evokes 'memories, nostalgia and access the energies of imagination in the many private minds'.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Kaye, *Site-Specific Art*, p. 92.

<sup>11</sup> A more in-depth discussion of documentation of can be found in Chapter 3

<sup>12</sup> Pearson, p. 24.

<sup>13</sup> Alison Oddey, 'Different Directions : The Potentials of Autobiographical Space', in *The potentials of spaces: the theory and practice of scenography & performance* (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2006), pp. 33–49 (p. 27).

<sup>14</sup> Oddey, p. 46.



Within this model there are a number of different approaches - maps or guidebooks created by performance-makers (the 'Mis-guides' of Wrights and Sites), audio-walks and tours guided by recordings (Graeme Miller, Janet Cardiff), or simple signs provoking reflective thought and impromptu performance (Wonders of Weston also by Wrights and Sites).<sup>15</sup> Participants might be encouraged to touch, smell, listen and look, 'challenging the way people perceive places'.<sup>16</sup> To other observers or passers-by, the participant experience may appear as an everyday activity (listening to headphones, talking on a mobile phone, reading a sign) - disguising participants as 'ordinary' pedestrians. In other examples, the participant may be instructed to perform a role, creating other unwitting spectators or participants. A recent Blast Theory performance ('A Machine to See With') concluded by asking participants to give all of the money in their wallet to a stranger. Even in less extreme examples, others in the site may inadvertently become 'spectators' - watching participants 'perform' unexpected forms of behaviour. Encounters with these secondary spectators may stimulate conversations, disrupting the 'nomadic' individual experience of the performance.<sup>17</sup>

Although similar in structure, a variant of this model plays with the relationship between multiple participants within the site - using the mediation of mobile technology and / geo-tagged media content. Mobile technology is employed as a way of mediating the interactions between participant, environment, and others (participants or passers-by). The structure of these interactions differs greatly depending on the performance. Examples include the type of urban treasure hunt set for participants by Invisible Flock ('The Visitor'), the role-playing games orchestrated by Blast Theory ('A Machine to See With'), or the audio traces left by participants for others to find ('Rider Spoke'). The act of leaving annotations or audio traces has become particularly prevalent with the spread of mobile technology (Smartphones). Farman has described this practice as a transformation of the physical environment of the site - producing a 'distinct sense of embodied space' in the city and playing with notions of intimacy in an age of mobile technology.<sup>18</sup> The nature of some of these technological practices also challenges the previous definitions of site-specificity set out in chapter 2. For example, 'Rider Spoke' may require participants to leave highly 'site-specific' stories for others to find, but the performance has been adapted and replayed across a number of other cities.

This model challenges the structured ordering of time that Schechner identified in performance as theatrical presentation. Traditional time structures are broken down as participants begin or leave the performance as they please - anyone can pick up a 'Mis-guide' at any time and retrace the route

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<sup>15</sup> Turner, p. 155.

<sup>16</sup> Gay McAuley in Pearson, p. 25.

<sup>17</sup> Toby Butler, 'A Walk of Art', p. 898.

<sup>18</sup> Farman, 'Mobile Media Performances as Asynchronous Embodiment', p. 49.

of that particular 'performance'. In other cases, audio works (such as Cardiff's 'The Missing Voice: Case Study B') may remain accessible and unchanged while the city is demolished and regenerated, and as result the 'site-specificity' of the artwork becomes gradually eroded. In the case of Graeme Miller's 'LINKED', the installation of audio transmitters were damaged and worn out over time so the remaining performance route became ruptured and incomplete. Other performance-makers guard against this contingency by only permitting participants to take part in the experience at carefully controlled and rehearsed time intervals by prior engagement and/or purchase of a ticket.

A common feature of these forms of practice is the ostensibly simple aesthetic form. As well as sometimes disguising the activity of the participants, this also limits the scope of documentation. Performance may be represented in the form of audio traces displaced into a discursive site (the web or in the gallery) or photographs of participants walking and listening to headphones.

### 5.1.3 Performers and Participants: Guiding, revealing, and telling stories

*Example practices: Forced Entertainment (Nights in this City), Matthias Lilienthal (X-Homes), Dries Verhoven (No Man's Land, pictured), Uninvited Guests (Give me back my broken night), the Sheffield Friday Night Ride.*



The third model is distinctive from the previous 'participants only' model in that it introduces the presence of live performer in the role of tour guide or narrator. Participants experience the site first-hand but their understanding of the site is shaped or mediated by the stories told by the guide. Pearson's description of this model ('You I and they go there together') highlights its intertextual nature and the way in which practitioners meld together dialogue, narrative, anecdote and memories, fragments of poetry and quotations, digressive and autobiographical excerpts.<sup>19</sup> The format of this model might be considered to be a subversion of the ubiquitous sightseeing bus or

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<sup>19</sup> Pearson, pp. 26–27.

walking tours, although performances may be targeted at local people, offering them the chance to become 'a tourist in their own backyard'.<sup>20</sup>

The role of tour guide may be undertaken by someone intimately familiar with a place (Matthias Lilienthal's X-Homes concept) or by someone with a particular form of local knowledge derived from being politically or socially excluded from the site (Dries Verhoven's tour with an asylum seeker). Other examples may focus on a particular set of real socio-political issues but explore those using fantastical or fictional narratives (Uninvited Guests exploring urban regeneration in Bristol). Much like the commercial guided tours for tourists, the storyteller needs to successfully weave together the peculiarities of local knowledge, histories, and places into a 'larger set of cultural meanings'.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, to hold the attention of the visitor, the tour must "vacillate between the intimately familiar and the infinitely strange".<sup>22</sup> Tours might be presented as solo narratives or presented in conjunction with others met along the way - but participants may be unsure whether the people and stories encountered are real or fictional. In this blurring of the real and fictional there are also potentially hazardous ethical obstacles to be negotiated. Forced Entertainment's 'Nights in this City' bus tour is one particularly well-known example, where the audience were transported to a housing estate in Sheffield. The performance later attracted criticism for the way that it took a theatre-going audience out to the 'raw material' - (people from a working-class or deprived background) for the sake of art, effectively transforming or colonising local people into passive artwork for the benefit of the performance.<sup>23</sup> More recently, the German practice Rimini Protokoll have experimented with similarly provocative ideas. Described by the group as a 'live spatial model', for the work 'Caro Sofia-X' Rimini Protokoll converted a Bulgarian truck into a mobile auditorium complete with one-way glass. The performance involved taking an audience on a tour of marginal urban sites in Sofia inside this mobile 'observatory'.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Knott.

<sup>21</sup> Jonathan R. Wynn, 'Guiding Practices: Storytelling Tricks for Reproducing the Urban Landscape', *Qualitative Sociology*, 28 (2005), 399-417 (p. 404) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11133-005-8365-2>>.

<sup>22</sup> Pearson, pp. 26-27.

<sup>23</sup> Tomlin.

<sup>24</sup> Rimini Protokoll <[http://rimini-protokoll.de/website/en/project\\_108.html](http://rimini-protokoll.de/website/en/project_108.html)> [accessed 26 November 2014].

#### 5.1.4 Performers and Participants: Performing, witnessing, and (re)framing places

*Example practices: Wilson and Wilson (Mapping the Edge), Slung Low (Mapping the City, pictured)*



This fourth model, which might be thought of as closer to traditional theatre, establishes a three-way relationship is between participant(s), site, and live performers within a theatrical frame. Theatrical presentations such as Slung Low's *'Mapping the City'* and Wilson and Wilsons' *'Mapping the Edge'* explore multiple sites and may incorporate a complex mix of live performers, scenographic elements, audio or soundtrack, lighting and projection designs. The participant experience is first-hand, either playing a role inside the theatrical frame, as outside spectators, or stepping between the two. This is described by Zaiontz's 'double duty', with participants potentially asked to act as 'delegated performers' at certain moments during the performance.<sup>25</sup> Another challenge of this model are the proxemics of participants and performers, particularly in terms of sight-lines, audibility, and the mobility of peripatetic performances. While this has tended to limit the scale of performances to manageable numbers of participants, practitioners such as Slung Low have turned towards wireless headphone technology. This enables a greater freedom of spatial dramaturgy while retaining a sensory between performers and participants.

The nature of this model tends to demand a larger scale and complexity in terms of technical production, numbers of participants, permissions, and funding. Where the site is within a populated urban setting, performance-makers might have negotiate the complexities of the (real) city, including passers-by (secondary spectators), traffic, and even unexpected confrontations with the police or fire brigade. The production of large-scale site-specific theatre is therefore even more likely than previous models to be tied (financially or otherwise) to local or national institutions. Institutional partnerships might include local authorities, galleries, theatres, or festivals, and require the negotiation of issues such as public liability insurance, site access and permissions, tickets, and marketing (issues that may also apply to the previous models). The nature of these relations is

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<sup>25</sup> Zaiontz, p. 168.

significant, particularly in terms of the political potential and instrumentalisation of site-specific performance, and is explored further in the first case study (chapter 6).

### 5.1.5 Practitioners and Participants: Gathering, sharing, and telling stories

*Example practices: Slung Low (Knowledge Emporium), Invisible Flock (Bring the Happy), Public Works (Folkestonomy), Encounters Shops (pictured).*



While perhaps least recognisable as a form of site-specific performance (at least in terms of performance as a bounded theatrical event), a significant number of performance-makers (and other creative / interdisciplinary practitioners) are involved in projects that seek to gather local stories and memories. This work has strong connections to research and practice in aural history, community development, and the use of the arts in therapeutic contexts. There is also a strong connection between this model of performance and the humanistic approaches to participatory planning and design advocated by authors such as Forester and Till.<sup>26</sup>

The gathering 'device' might take the form of a temporary occupation of a vacant shop unit (Encounters, Bring the Happy) or an adapted vehicle that can be taken to different sites and events (Slung Low's caravan or Public Works' milk float). Examples of practice are often site-located rather than site-specific, with groups moving a collection 'device' around to different sites. However a number of projects such as Public Works' Folkestonomy are created as one-off site-specific responses to a particular context. Other projects represent long-term engagement with a particular community or issue (such as religious or racial tensions, unemployment, or environmental issues) - developing artistic practices around storytelling as a way of helping people to express their thoughts and feelings. Groups such as Invisible Flock celebrate the process of gathering, sharing / telling, using performance and music as a way of expressing a curated set of the stories collected.

<sup>26</sup> John Forester; Till, 'The Negotiation of Hope'.

These long-term practices raise the issue of the social and ethical responsibilities of the performance-makers. This issue, which is raised by number of other critics, is particularly pertinent when participatory art and storytelling engage with vulnerable groups and where artistic practice become merged with social work.<sup>27</sup> Kester suggests that working in unfamiliar sites and amidst complex social issues can raise ethical questions that artists and performance-makers may not be prepared for.<sup>28</sup> This relates back to questions of locality, specificity and the positioning of the artist in relation to the community.

#### 5.1.6 Practitioners and Participants: Participating, playing, or enacting futures

*Example practices: Raumlabor (various), Jeanne van Heeswijk, STEALTH.unlimited, Ruth Catlow and Mary Flanagan (Play Southend), Stephen Hodge with Kaleider (Where to build the walls that protect us)*



The final model spans the fields of participatory art or performance practice. ‘Participating, playing / enacting’ potentially describes a huge range of artistic projects, but in the context of this thesis it focuses on those that encourage participants to take on a playful or performative role in reshaping or reimagining of city. This model of performance sees others (non-professionals) invited as participants within a set of rules or an artistic concept already established by practitioners. In more collaborative projects, participants and practitioners may construct the initial context and rules together, with the practitioner(s) taking on a role more akin to that of curator. In either approach, the ‘participating, playing, enacting’ model tends to be defined by a longer-term engagement with site or community in the form of a series of facilitated workshops and events. The complex nature of these projects often results in multiple outcomes or forms of expression, of which performance may be only one.

<sup>27</sup> Kester, pp. 137–140.

<sup>28</sup> Kester, p. 140.

In the field of urban planning, playful engagement in the site through performance, role-playing or more structured game-playing has been identified as an effective way of engaging participants and increasing awareness at the early stages of a participatory project.<sup>29</sup> This approach has been adapted by politically-motivated performance-makers seeking to critique mainstream approaches to urban development. This is an emancipatory or utopian approach to participation - one that seeks to use imagination and creativity to transform the site and/or the aspirations of local residents. Recent examples of this model include the construction materials provided for public participants by STEALTH.unlimited in '(dis)Assembled', the various participatory projects hosted by the architectural practice Raumlabor, and the creation of a new city (albeit in scale model form) by participants in workshops led by Stephen Hodge with Kaleider.

The relationship between performance and play (introduced in chapter 2 via the theories of Schechner and Caillois) is significant in understanding the way in which these projects are understood as performances. The theme of critical play also links this model to the practice of the Situationist International, who adopted playful tactics in their aims to disrupt and transform the way the city was used and conceived. At the same time, Debord and others rejected the flippancy or triviality that may have previously been associated with ludic behaviour in favour of an 'authentically collective concept of play'.<sup>30</sup> Stevens has examined playful behaviour as a way of understanding the relationship between the material built environment, social relations of the city, and people's perception and behaviour. He suggests play is often motivated by a drive to step outside the boundaries of safety, predictability, and convention to pursue and test new ideas and uncertain prospects.<sup>31</sup> Creative practices that disrupt urban space have also been a response to the 'cultural boredom' and an effort to recreate the kind of spontaneous and playful behaviour that has been driven out by a society preoccupied with work, instrumental functionality, rational, and regulation.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Nick Wates, *The Community Planning Handbook* (London: Earthscan, 2000), p. 68.

<sup>30</sup> Situationist International, 'Contribution to a Situationist Definition of Play', trans. by Reuben Keehan, 1958 <<http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/play.html>> [accessed 1 November 2013].

<sup>31</sup> Quentin Stevens, *The Ludic City: Exploring the Potential of Public Spaces* (Abingdon, Oxon.: Taylor & Francis, 2007), p. 196.

<sup>32</sup> Melissa Butcher, 'Creative Disturbances in Urban Space', in *ATLAS: Geography, Architecture and Change in an Interdependent World*, ed. by Renata Tysczuk and others (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2012), pp. 50–55 (p. 51).

## 5.2 Recap of the research scope and aims

*This study, which foregrounds an interdisciplinary approach to research, seeks to develop creative collaborations with performance practitioners for the purpose of testing practices, methods and theories from site-specific performance as a way of critiquing and extending the existing architectural toolkit of design processes, methods and representation techniques.*

Architectural research is itself a broad field of inquiry, and one that addresses built environment issues by synthesising theories and methods from a number of other disciplines (art, geography, history, engineering, philosophy, etc.) and overarching research paradigms from the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities. Alongside this interdisciplinary research sits the realm of architectural practice, which also involves a kind of tacit synthesis of technical and rational forms of knowledge and problem-solving within a creative design process. Until relatively recently, the traditional divide between practice and research was reinforced by rigid academic definitions of what constituted knowledge production. New approaches have sought to challenge these frameworks and expand the notion of ‘what counts’ as architectural research, leading to the emergence of new paradigms of ‘practice-led’ or ‘design research’. Practice-led forms of inquiry are not just limited to architecture, but are arguably more established within other fields of design, the visual arts, and within performance studies. Among a number of recent theorists, Smith and Dean have proposed an overarching definition of this research paradigm as consisting of both the artwork/ performance/ design proposal (outcome), and the process of creating the work (practice) as generating research insights that might be documented, theorised and generalised.<sup>33</sup> This conception of practice-led research poses a challenge to the existing binary of quantitative/ qualitative methodologies, and will be explored in greater detail in the third section of this chapter.

Central to the practice of architecture is the notion of collaboration. This concept is used to describe a number of different types of involvement in the design and research process; planned or unplanned, disciplined or undisciplined, accidental and even sometimes unwanted.<sup>34</sup> The nature of architectural practice requires practitioners to develop ways of productively working with a wide range of collaborative partners in order to draw upon a wide skill-base and deliver successful projects. This might include professional consultants, other designers, contractors, paying clients, and, as was discussed in chapter 4, representatives of the local community. While the discipline of

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<sup>33</sup> *Practice-Led Research, Research-Led Practice in the Creative Arts*, ed. by Hazel Smith and Roger T. Dean (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), p. 7.

<sup>34</sup> Muf, *This Is What We Do: A Muf Manual* (London: Ellipsis, 2001), p. 28.



architecture still has a long way to go in terms of developing participatory practice, there are numerous examples of practices and projects that have developed strong relations with local communities ('users') to ensure a more inclusive design process. Within architectural and urbanist research the sheer complexity of the city requires the development of working relationships with other disciplines and researchers. This might include philosophers, geographers, economists, sociologists, and town planners as well as researchers and practitioners from the arts, film and performance studies. The expertise and perspectives brought by these disciplines bring (hopefully) leads to a more layered understanding of urban spaces and places.

While the broad research base and collaborative nature of architecture might be considered a particular strength of the discipline, the competing nature of different paradigms also has the potential to create a kind of 'disciplinary anxiety' or tension.<sup>35</sup> Some critics have argued that it might, therefore, be more productive to consider architecture as a research subject, rather than a research discipline - a move that might relieve some of this tension and provide possibilities for greater multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary studies.<sup>36</sup> Another key starting points for this thesis was the call from architectural critic Jane Rendell for architectural researchers to keep actively exploring and testing the boundaries of architecture as a 'field of study'. Rendell argues for a turn towards other disciplines to extend the scope of imagination and provoke a critical challenge to mainstream architectural design processes and methodologies.<sup>37</sup> Public art and performance have been put forward by Rendell as fields of practice that are potentially best positioned to inform the activity of architectural design through critically creative collaborations.<sup>38</sup>

Central to the motivation for looking outside the discipline of architecture is the critical distance offered by art and performance practices; a means of proposing action and reflection without being stymied by the same economic and political concerns that underpin existing ways of doing architecture, or producing space. Rendell's call is situated within a much wider critical / philosophical movement in architectural theory; one that seeks to challenge the dominant means through which urban space is understood, represented, and produced within mainstream architectural practice. A number of these criticisms have been introduced across the introduction and literature review chapters. To recap, these issues include:

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<sup>35</sup> George Dodds, 'Performance Anxiety', *Journal of Architectural Education*, 61 (2008), 3–3  
<<http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1531-314X.2008.00180.x>>.

<sup>36</sup> Jane Rendell, 'Architectural Research and Disciplinarity', *Arq : Architectural Research Quarterly*, 8 (2004), 141–47 (p. 143).

<sup>37</sup> Rendell, 'Architectural Research and Disciplinarity', p. 146.

<sup>38</sup> Rendell, *Art and Architecture*, p. 191.

- Architectural production as primarily led by economic concerns and profit for clients or investors at the cost of architectural practice as a socially beneficial or humanising force.<sup>39</sup>
- The relationship between architectural/ urbanist practice and a sense of locality or 'site-specificity', particularly in the context of broader shifts in professional modes of production, and the globalisation of practice.
- Architectural representations (maps, models, diagrams, and drawings) as driven by a desire to abstract the world in order to more easily understand it. In doing so, abstraction promotes an objective or Cartesian understanding of space, maintains the professional - layperson divide, and denies the temporality, complexity and contingency of the city as lived space.<sup>40</sup>
- Despite the political rhetoric around community participation, existing modes of professional practice limit the agency of others in shaping the built environment (designing 'for' rather than 'with'), and so maintaining and reinforcing existing unequal power relations.<sup>41</sup>

Each of these criticisms represents a complex and contested set of issues that are underpinned by a diverse range of philosophical, epistemological, and political positions, a thorough discussion of which is beyond the scope of this thesis. Nonetheless, this diverse set of critical concerns might be broadly characterised as part of a shift from an objective (or quantitative / positivist) view of the world towards a subjective (or qualitative/ interpretivist) view, acknowledging and celebrating the complexity and fluidity of the city as a *lived place*.

This research proposes site-specific performance practice as both research subject **and** methodology for researching sites of urban regeneration. A qualitative, multi-method approach has been employed in order to draw out the multiple experiences of performance, including those of practitioners, participants, and first-hand reflections of the researcher. The process of gathering and analysing this 'cluster of narratives' attempts to not only offer a way of understanding (a) performance, but also suggests a way of understanding the potential role of performance practices in mapping and reshaping urban sites.

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<sup>39</sup> Brook and Dunn, p. 231.

<sup>40</sup> Till, *Architecture Depends*; Massey; Corner.

<sup>41</sup> Jones, Petrescu and Till.

### 5.3 Research on site-specific performance-makers

The opening chapters of the literature review section of this thesis have already presented some of the key concepts used to understand the critical operations of site-specific performance practice. In order to begin to build a robust case for the proposed 'critically creative collaboration' between site-specific performance and architectural research, this section sets out the approach used to carry out research *on* live performance events as case studies. Within the context of this thesis, a methodology has been developed to address the following initial research questions:

- Who commissions and funds existing forms of site-specific performance?
- What are the motivations of existing site-specific performance-makers in addressing sites and issues of urban regeneration?
- How are site-specific performances conceived/ sited/ produced /performed /evaluated?
- What effects (or perhaps more appropriately 'affects') do site-specific performances have on participants (both individually and as a collective)?

Peterson has argued that different methodological approaches to performance can be distinguished according to how they define their object of analysis (or in other words, how they answer the question "what is performance?").<sup>42</sup> While live performances are typically documented as a 'stable' object or product, they are actually a complex combination of processes and interpretations.<sup>43</sup> In the wake of the performative turn and the writing of authors such as Schechner and McKenzie, we might now understand performance practice as a continuum; from everyday performative gestures (of gender or class) to the bounded theatrical event. Inherent in the above research questions are some important assumptions about the nature of performance, particularly the idea that 'performance' exists as a researchable event - one that researchers are able to study and analyse through some variation of (typically qualitative) methodology.

Like architecture, performance studies is an interdisciplinary field of inquiry and one that readily incorporates theories and methodologies from other disciplines. According to Pavis, the analysis of live performance is an 'enormously demanding' task, and one that requires the combination of existing available qualitative methodologies and tools.<sup>44</sup> Where these are not deemed adequate, performance research requires the invention methodologies suited to a specific type of performance project and research objectives. It is therefore a field 'dogged' by methodological suspicions, with no

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<sup>42</sup> Peterson.

<sup>43</sup> McAuley, *Space in Performance*, p. 15.

<sup>44</sup> Patrice Pavis, *Analyzing Performance: Theater, Dance, and Film* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), p. 1.

universal approach to methodology or methods.<sup>45</sup> Despite this constant invention (and reinvention), Peterson has suggested that methodologies of performance (and storytelling) research can be broadly categorised into four approaches:<sup>46</sup>

- Semiotic – analysis of performance as an object or container of culture to be interpreted through identification of signs or codes
- Ethnographic - analysis of performance as a process whereby the researcher becomes immersed within a community of practice in order to narrativise or thematise the shared values and practices of members of that particular community
- Historiographic – reconstruction of performance through historical / artifactual research.
- Phenomenological – a first-hand and reflective understanding of performance whereby the individual experiences the 'site-phenomenon' through an immediate and bodily process. This process requires a conscious 'present' interaction with space, the performance, and the world.<sup>47</sup>

Australian performance scholar Gay McAuley has pioneered interest in the application of mixed research methods in her performance research, which also focuses on participant response, site-specificity and performance space. McAuley argues that theories of spectatorship and participation are frequently made on the basis of a 'virtual performance' imagined by the author through reading the playtext, rather than employing empirical study of the actual audience experience.<sup>48</sup> McAuley goes on to propose an interdisciplinary and case-based research framework for performance, with carefully documented empirical studies of specific performances, which (ideally) includes access to the earlier stages of conception, development, and rehearsal. These performances or 'cases' are then used as a basis for wider theoretical generalisation.<sup>49</sup> Ethnographic and experiential (phenomenological) methods are both used in tandem to engage with performance as 'dynamic process of communication in which the spectators are vitally implicated'.<sup>50</sup> This hybrid approach has been influential in developing a methodology for the empirical research that is flexible enough to respond to the complex conditions encountered on the ground. At an analytical level, the research has been informed by the twin conceptions of site-specific performance employed by Jen Harvie,

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<sup>45</sup> Pavis, p. 1.

<sup>46</sup> Peterson, pp. 150–151. Each of these methodological approaches describes a diverse (and often contested) range of theories, methods and philosophical positions, which are not possible to cover in this overview. .

<sup>47</sup> Victoria Hunter, 'Embodying the Site: The Here and Now in Site-Specific Dance Performance', *New Theatre Quarterly*, 21 (2005), 367–81; The work of Hunter (and other performance scholars) draws heavily on Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. by Colin Smith (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962).

<sup>48</sup> McAuley, *Space in Performance*, p. 236.

<sup>49</sup> McAuley, *Space in Performance*, pp. 11–12.

<sup>50</sup> McAuley, *Space in Performance*, p. 7.

with further implications for the methodology and research design. The combination of different methodological approaches can therefore be viewed as an attempt to reconcile the binary positions of performance analysis (praxis and poesis) as discussed in Chapter 2.

The first of these positions (which Harvie refers to as cultural materialism) is primarily concerned with the social, political, and material conditions that shape the development of a particular cultural practice (site-specific performance-making) and relationship between performance and site. In light of this, particular attention is paid to the way in which each performance has been funded, commissioned, developed, and produced including the perspectives of other stakeholders external to the performance-making process. This approach also offers a way of bringing back the research questions related to wider socio-political goals of commissioning performance as part of 'arts-led' urban regeneration. Harvie's second reading of performance considers the potential for performing to create and shape participants' individual identities within the city, as well as the potential for performance-makers to create and shape identities of the sites (performative analysis). In methodological terms, this requires the design of qualitative research methods that encourage individual participants to reflect upon their experience of the performance and the site in the days and weeks following the event. Despite the misgivings of performance scholars such as Matthew Reason, this reflection is most likely to be articulated through written or spoken reflections.<sup>51</sup>

### 5.3.1 Design of the empirical research

The purpose of the empirical research is the qualitative documentation and analysis of the motivations and experiences of performance-makers and public participants involved in the development, production, and performance of site-specific works. The methodology for the empirical research is qualitative, combining ethnographic and experiential modes of inquiry within an overarching interpretivist framework. This follows the principle that the experience of creating and participating in (site-specific) performance is constructed through subjective interpretations of those events, and that talking to people about their individual subjective experiences is therefore a meaningful way of researching performance. This follows the work of McAuley and others - with a foregrounding of empirical qualitative research data gathered from performance-makers and participants in the context of local case-study performances. This empirical data collection process was initially tested on a large-scale site-specific performance in 2011 (*'Mapping the City'*, chapter 6), and adapted for a second site-specific performance in 2012 (*'The Anfield Home Tour'*, chapter 7).

### A note on terminologies

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<sup>51</sup> Reason, p.412.

Within this interdisciplinary research context, the term '*participant*' can potentially cause some confusion. This is due to the way it is used to refer to a number of different roles within (social) research, arts practice, and participatory activities in urban planning, architecture, and urbanism. The term has also already been applied throughout this thesis as a descriptor for the role of 'spectators who actively participate in the performance event'. For the purposes of clarity, this methodology chapter will continue to refer to those individuals as *participants*. The term *informants* is, therefore, used to describe the full range of individuals (including performance-makers and other professionals) interviewed, observed, or surveyed over the course of the empirical case-study research.

*Ethnographic methods* refers here to a process whereby the researcher engages with the processes of rehearsal and production of a performance through participant-observation.<sup>52</sup> This is supported by in-depth interviews held with key practitioners (key informants) involved in the creation of the case-study performances. These methods are used to build up a picture of important contextual information about each case and the shared values that are held by the performance-makers. This includes the nature of any funding, relations with institutions (local authorities or funding bodies), the design and production process and the critical or artistic intentions that lie behind the performance.

*Experiential methods* refers here to a process whereby the researcher engages with the performance through first-hand experience of the event as a participant (first-person experiential research) and/or by gathering descriptive accounts from other participants (respondents) about their individual experience immediately following a performance.

### 5.3.2 Case study selection and artistic audit

As the case study chapters go on demonstrate, each case responds to a particular set of local issues in a very different way. This places an even greater significance on providing detail on the social, political, and environmental context of each case study - in this way any future research that might attempt to transfer findings to other situations or sites will know if the constructs can be meaningfully applied.<sup>53</sup>

The purpose of the case studies can be summarised as:

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<sup>52</sup> Paul Atkinson, 'Performance and Rehearsal: The Ethnographer at the Opera', in *Qualitative Research Practice*, ed. by Clive Seale and others (London: SAGE Publications, 2004), pp. 94–106.

<sup>53</sup> J. Baxter and J. Eyles, 'Evaluating Qualitative Research in Social Geography: Establishing "rigour" in Interview Analysis', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 22 (1997), 505–25 (p. 516).

- exploring and documenting the methods and creative processes used by site-specific performance-makers respond to complex urban sites
- testing methods for the gathering of descriptive accounts of participants and analysing their experiences
- exploring the way in which site-specific performance practice can articulate the complexities and contradictions inherent in the processes of regeneration

A suite of different research methods have been employed across the different phases of the research project. The first of these phases (which stretched across three years of the project) was intended primarily as a scoping exercise of existing site-specific performance projects. Haseman describes the importance of this form of survey of relevant practice or 'artistic audit', which is viewed as a way of supplementing and transforming the literature review into a 'more layered and rich analysis' of the practice context.<sup>54</sup> This involved identifying the range of contemporary site-specific (or site-based) performance practices. With a focus on UK practice, the audit prioritised works and events that were sited in urban contexts and/or explored themes around dereliction and decay, deindustrialisation, and urban regeneration. As a relative outsider to the field of site-specific performance, it was not immediately obvious as to where and when site-specific events and performances were happening. The local, small-scale nature of this type of practice often limits the range of publicity and numbers of performances or tickets. The methods used to find out about events relevant to the research included networking with fellow performance/ architecture researchers within the University, at conferences, and through the use of social media to contact performance-makers directly. The central method used to collect information on these supporting cases was participation in and observation of performance events in cities across the UK and beyond. This was supported by attendance at specialist events and arts festivals, such as the Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space.<sup>55</sup> Participating in events as a member of the public – as well as a researcher – provided opportunities to access performances, carry out informal conversations with practitioners and performance-makers, observe the participation of others, listen to comments, and begin to build an understanding of how people interact with and within site-specific performances. This process has, therefore, played an important role in supporting the literature review and helping to develop a critical sensitivity to this form of practice and to develop the taxonomy of site-specific performance practice (detailed in chapter 5 and appendix 1). Through attendance at a wide range of events and further dialogue with performance-makers, a number of

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<sup>54</sup> Brad Haseman, 'A Manifesto for Performative Research', *Media International Australia Incorporating Culture and Policy: quarterly journal of media research and resources*, 2006, 98–106 (p. 104).

<sup>55</sup> 'Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space', 2011 <<http://www.pq.cz/en/>> [accessed 3 October 2012].

performances emerged as potentially suitable (and feasible) to carry forward as detailed case studies.

#### *Location*

All three case studies were carried out in cities in northern England (UK). The decision to locate the study in this context was driven by the development of a set of specific research questions, which address the social-political context and urban regeneration policy of the UK context and specific context of recent urban regeneration projects in northern England. However, the development of these research questions was also a process shaped by accessibility and feasibility of case studies and informants within relatively easy reach of Sheffield. This was particularly significant when making multiple journeys to site to carry out first-hand observations and collect other data.

Further important considerations regarding case-study selection relate to following four key questions:

- *Site-specificity* - is a performance created specifically for a place or community (as opposed to being 'site-based' or 'site-generic')?
- *Structure* - who goes to site, who performs and how do they move through and across the site?
- *Participation* - how are local people involved in the conception, production, performance, or evaluation of the performance?
- *Scale* - what area does the performance cover, how many participants are involved, and how many performances take place?

Due to the relatively small number of potential case studies that emerged out of the artistic audit, it was decided that certain criteria, such as structure, scale, and level of participation, could vary across the range of cases. Other key aspects such as site-specificity were central to the research questions and therefore a required criterion. However, many of the performances that have been excluded as cases are relevant to the wider discussion and appear in appendix of supporting cases (appendix 1).

#### **5.3.3 Case Study Structure**

Contemporary performance-making is a practice that resists formal structure, demonstrated by the breadth of examples of practice referred to across this thesis. Despite this, many of the site-specific practices identified across the three models of interest (as described in section 5.1) share a number of common processes, particularly in terms of how they are sited, conceived, funded, produced, performed, and evaluated. These processes are mapped in Figure 5.1, which, despite the limitations



of a linear form of representation, has been developed as a loose-fit model for the three case-study performances described in chapters 6, 7 and 8.

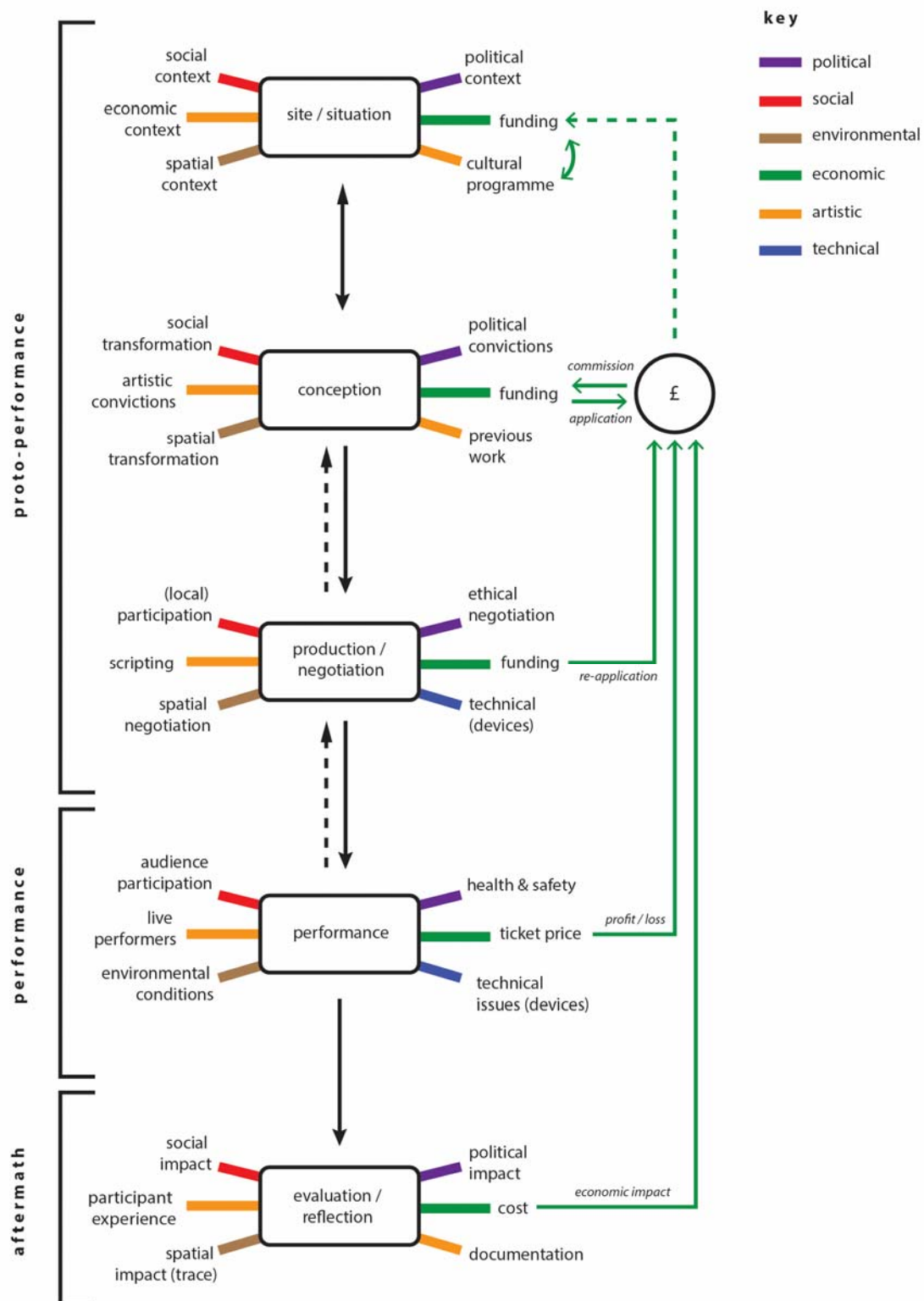


Figure 5.1. A process map for case study performances. The black arrows between the four main activities are used to indicate iterative and cyclical forms of learning and production). Image: Author.

#### 5.3.4 Case study access

Twinned with the case study selection process is the key issue of access. Writing on methodologies of performance, McAuley suggests that a key barrier to the use of methods such as participant-observation is the ‘notoriously difficult’ issue of negotiating access to observe rehearsals and other behind-the-scenes production processes.<sup>56</sup> To some practitioners, the idea of working with researchers may be of intrinsic interest, while others may view this kind of access as a risk - whether to the way that their processes are documented and represented, in terms of interference in day-to-day operations, or in the way that the researcher may uncover conflicts or contradictions within their practice. Negotiations around access may focus around arrangements to provide return benefits to the practitioner. This concept of *beneficence* is common in ethnographic research, and describes the return benefit or advantage that the organization or group may wish to derive from allowing an outsider to observe it.<sup>57</sup> Social scientists Baxter & Eyles describe the arrangement of access for beneficence in terms of a social ‘contract’ between informants and researchers.<sup>58</sup>

In the experience of carrying out this research, the practitioners that have been approached have been very open to becoming involved as a research case study. This is perhaps related to the open structure of the particular organisations involved, but also to nature of site-specific performance-making as a participatory practice and the collaborative skill-sets necessary in order to make projects happen. Gaining research access to performance therefore takes a level of preparation and experience. A particular example is the timetabling of the research, which must be planned to coincide with the strict schedules and programmes of live performance. However, there are also elements of opportunism and fortuitousness – during the course of this research, certain projects (such as *Mapping the City*) fell neatly into research schedule, while others possibilities (such as *Uninvited Guests* in Bristol or *Local Play* in Southend) were not possible to use as case studies due to timings or other access issues.

#### 5.3.5 Designing the research

Within the framework of the case studies, a suite of qualitative methods have been used in order to document and analyse the different phases of the performance event, including ‘proto-performance’ (conception, production, and rehearsal), live performance, and ‘aftermath’ (documentation, reflection, and evaluation).<sup>59</sup> Further details are described in Figure 5.2. Each of the different methods across each case study is designed for a different purpose, but taken together might be

<sup>56</sup> McAuley, *Space in Performance*, p. 13.

<sup>57</sup> Clive Seale and others, ‘Introduction: Inside Qualitative Research’, in *Qualitative Research Practice* (London: SAGE, 2004), pp. 1–11 (p. 142).

<sup>58</sup> Baxter and Eyles, p. 515.

<sup>59</sup> Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, p. 225.

thought of as being analogous to Pearson and Shanks' description of the 'cluster of narratives' that survive a live performance; those of the watcher and the watched.<sup>60</sup> These include formal data collection tools (questionnaires and interviews) alongside ethnographic techniques such as field notes and participant-observation. Reflective writing is also employed as a method of documenting and reflecting upon the live events.

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<sup>60</sup> Pearson and Shanks, p. 22.

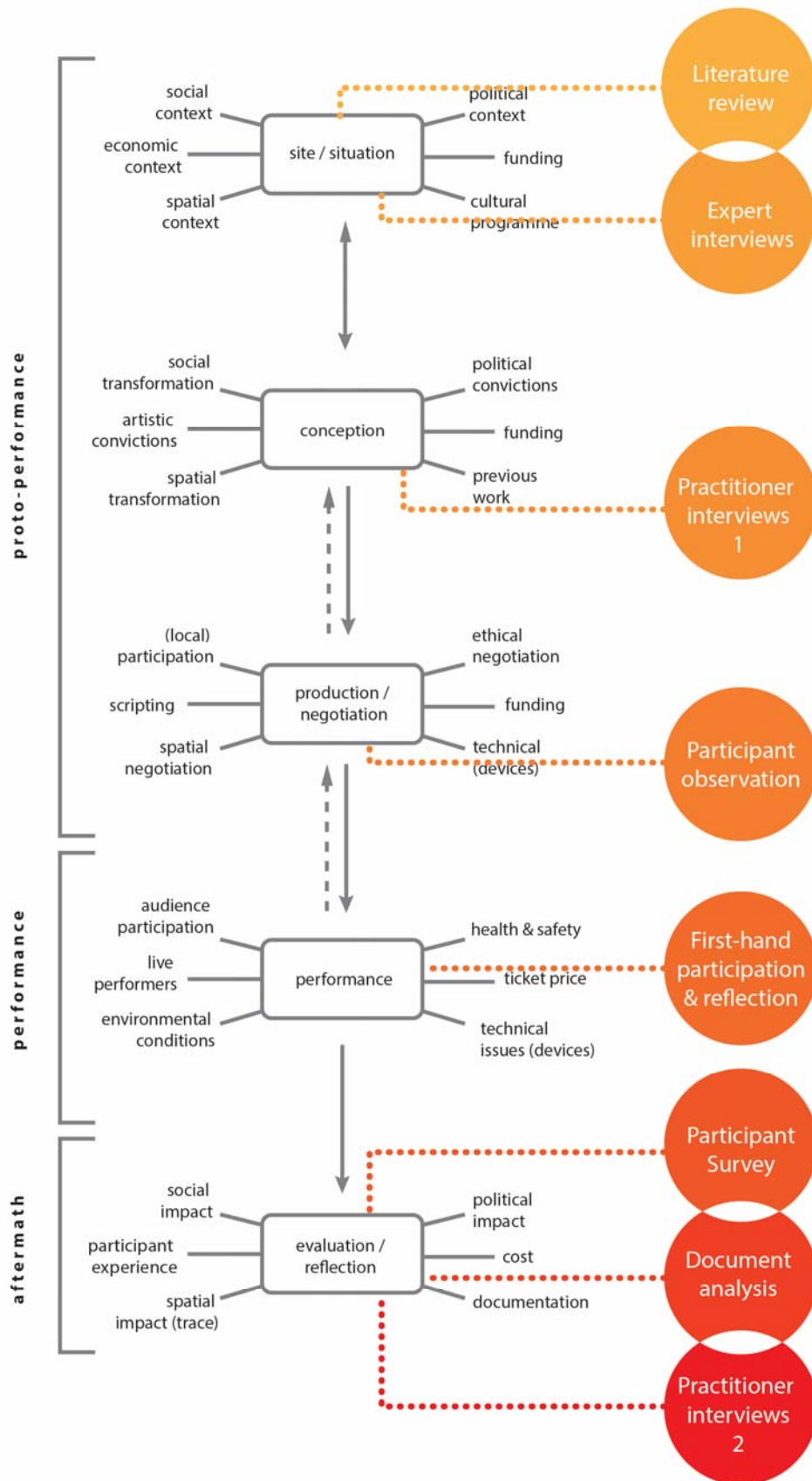


Figure 5.2. Case study performance process map with research methods overlaid. Further details of the research methods is provided in appendix 2. Image: Author.

### **5.3.6 Ethical considerations (part 1)**

This research is bound by the University of Sheffield research ethics procedure, which provides a framework for the consideration of ethical issues with a focus on research that engages with human participants. The original application for the ethical approval of the research was made to the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) prior to the commencement of any empirical research. The application was unconditionally approved in April 2011 (see appendix 5). Applying for and gaining ethical consent was an important process in crystallising key aspects of the research design and the possible levels of involvement of the different participants.

A key ethical consideration was the need to obtain informed consent from all research informants, whether professional performance-makers, participants, or other members of the public. An information sheet was provided to all informants detailing the purpose of the research, the privacy of data, an option for data to be anonymised in any write-up of the research, and the right to withdraw from the study at any time. A signature (or digital checkbox) agreeing to the terms of the information document was required prior to collection of any questionnaire or interview data. As part of the data collection process, a number of measures were also put in place to protect the data provided by informants. Anonymising names within interview transcriptions or questionnaire records, deleting any records of personal data (email addresses) not required, password-protecting all retained data on a personal computer, and avoiding storage of unnecessary personal data.

The ethical application also considered any potential risks to myself as researcher, the performance-makers (co-researchers) and participants. These broad risks were considered to be low in terms of likelihood. The majority research engagements were at public/ ticketed events (risk assessed by the performance-makers). A potentially greater level of risk was posed by site visits to observe processes of production and rehearsal. This risk was mitigated by a health and safety briefing from the person responsible for managing the site (where appropriate) and always observing the company's on-site health and safety procedures.

Overall the research was carried out in a way that was courteous and respectful, demonstrating the conduct expected as a representative of the University and the research community - whether towards co-researchers, interviewees, informants, or other members of the public.

### **5.3.7 Summary**

The methodology described in this section can be summarised as a qualitative inquiry combining ethnographic and experiential methods to study the process of conceiving, producing, performing, and reflecting-upon site-specific performance. The range of methods for data collection included

semi-structured interviews, participant observation, participant surveys, first-hand reflections, and document analysis. Further details of data collection and analysis methods is provided in appendix 2. These methods have been valuable in terms of establishing the scope of the research, examining existing site-specific working practices first-hand, and testing a number of data collection techniques in the first two case studies. Notwithstanding the value of the methods described here, there are a number of inherent limitations to this approach, particularly in the context of the wider research aims. These methodological limitations, the justification for the redesign of the research, and a description of a revised collaborative approach are described in the third and final section of the methodology chapter.

## 5.4 Research with site-specific performance-makers

### 5.4.1 Limitations and repositioning

In 'normative' forms of social research (research 'on' others), the researcher's relationship with their informants is typically limited to the goals of gaining access to their setting, managing the practical issues of ongoing research processes, and (depending on the precise nature of the project) sharing the findings of the research for discussion.<sup>61</sup> The notion that such an approach asserts a 'disconnect' between researcher and subject has been put forward by proponents of new methodological approaches who have sought to challenge and extend the traditional paradigm of social research, redefining what is meant by 'original contribution to knowledge'. Examples such as collaborative ethnography require a 'deliberate and explicit' emphasis on collaboration throughout the research process, while action research methodologies (used within many fields) emphasise the role of research subjects as co-participants and stakeholders in a process that transforms inquiry into praxis or action.<sup>62</sup> Rather than a primary goal of developing theory, research as praxis is directed towards solving real-world problems, or to change or improve practices. The related approach of participatory action research (PAR) applies a similar approach but requires the researcher(s) to leave the (privileged) setting of the academy to tackle issues identified by communities beyond the institution.<sup>63</sup> Gobo defines this combination of knowledge-gathering activity (research) with an operational intent (practice or action) using the broader category of 'transformative

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<sup>61</sup> John Heron, *Co-Operative Inquiry: Research into the Human Condition* (London: SAGE, 1996), p. 9.

<sup>62</sup> Luke Eric Lassiter, *The Chicago Guide to Collaborative Ethnography* (Chicago, IL.; London: University of Chicago Press, 2005), p. 16; *The Landscape of Qualitative Research: Theories and Issues*, ed. by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, 2nd Ed. (London; Thousand Oaks, CA.; New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 2003), p. 48.

<sup>63</sup> Heron, p. 8.

methodologies'.<sup>64</sup> Advocates see these examples of transformative research as changing social consciousness and (eventually) as challenging inequalities in wealth and power.

In conventional social research terms, a transformative methodology might be thought of as the 'deliberate manipulation' of the setting in which the study takes place. This intervention in the site is typically enacted in order to produce (or begin to produce) behaviours which can then be collected and analysed in tandem with other methodological approaches, methods or forms of analysis.<sup>65</sup> Within this family of participatory approaches the fundamental issue around power relations must not be overlooked, particularly the terms upon which participants become involved. Especially relevant here is the distinction between instrumental and transformative participation, as described in chapter 4.<sup>66</sup>

Co-operative inquiry (now often referred to using the broad term 'co-production') has affinities with the action research approaches outlined above but has been developed as a distinct epistemological and methodological approach. It has been summarised as "a way of working with other people who have similar concerns and interests to yourself".<sup>67</sup> Co-operative research design involves the initiating researcher(s) inviting one or more other individuals to become co-inquirers, with co-subjects and co-researchers working together at each stage of the inquiry. Unlike traditional approaches to PAR (where the motivated/ educated /privileged researcher seeks to work with the relatively unmotivated/ uneducated /underprivileged other), the motivation of co-operative inquiry is focused on the transformation of a shared site or practice. Co-operative inquirers often view their own privileged sites of practice as 'deformed' and, therefore, act in order to improve existing practices.<sup>68</sup> This approach to research has a particular resonance within the field of architecture and the collaborative nature of practice and research described in the introduction to this chapter.

#### 5.4.2 Towards a practice-led or 'performative' research paradigm

Alongside the progressive aims of the participatory and transformative modes of inquiry outlined above, a number of researchers in the creative community have continued to seek a break from the methodological restrictions of social research. Haseman is among a growing number of critics to argue that creative practice should not just be *placed* within the research process but that it should

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<sup>64</sup> Giampietro Gobo, *Doing Ethnography* (London: SAGE Publications, 2008), p. 26.

<sup>65</sup> Gobo, p. 26.

<sup>66</sup> Kruks (1983) in Wisner, Stea and Kruks, p. 276.

<sup>67</sup> J. Heron and P. Reason, 'The Practice of Co-Operative Inquiry: Research "with" rather than "on" People', in *Handbook of action research*, ed. by P. Reason and H. Bradbury (London; Thousand Oaks, CA.; New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 2001), p. 177.

<sup>68</sup> Heron, p. 8.

also *lead* research through practice.<sup>69</sup> This alternative approach, Haseman suggests, is a way of looking beyond the improvement of practices (in) towards a goal of extending and redefining the ‘conceptual architecture’ of a discipline.<sup>70</sup> This approach extends the notion of the ‘researcher as instrument’ from ethnography, action research, or cooperative inquiry. In performative research (which has also be described using the term ‘arts-informed research’), the ‘instrument’ of inquiry is the ‘researcher as artist’ or designer.<sup>71</sup> Within the fields of architecture and urbanism, creative design practice has begun to be more widely recognised and accepted as a valid research activity. More commonly referred as ‘design research’ or ‘research by design’, this sees the researcher employ design perspectives to understand the socio-spatial context of sites and make spatial propositions. Within the context of architectural research, Servillo and Schreurs have defined research-by-design in terms of the inherently interdisciplinary nature of knowledge production, the cyclical processes of design and reflection (through creative-abductive reasoning), and the extended time period over which researchers and practitioners must work together to develop new conceptual and methodological frameworks and tools.<sup>72</sup> While design research typically draws upon the more established methodologies and methods of the natural or social sciences, the ability for design researchers to make creative leaps, use lateral thinking, and employ techniques such as drawing and mapping are identified by Fraser as key strengths of this approach.<sup>73</sup> Haseman goes on to describe the way in which practice-led researchers from across the creative disciplines borrow strategies from the qualitative research tradition, but these strategies will typically be repurposed or ‘inflected differently’ from their qualitative application.<sup>74</sup> Performative or design researchers, therefore, commonly progress their research by employing variations of reflective practice, participant observation, ethnography (or autoethnography), and the inquiry cycle from action research or cooperative inquiry.<sup>75</sup>

In framing creative arts or design practice as research, a number of authors also highlight the multiple forms of contribution involved within practice-led research. Smith and Dean suggest that the knowledge contribution of practice-led research is embodied in the artwork itself (as the output

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<sup>69</sup> Haseman.

<sup>70</sup> Haseman, p. 99.

<sup>71</sup> Arda L. Cole and J. Graya Knowles, ‘Arts-Informed Research’, in *Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA. ; London: Sage Publications, 2008), p. 61.

<sup>72</sup> Loris Servillo and Jan Schreurs, ‘Pragmatism and Research by Design: Epistemological Virtues and Methodological Challenges’, *International Planning Studies*, 18 (2013), 358–71 (p. 359) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13563475.2013.837136>>.

<sup>73</sup> Murray Fraser, *Design Research in Architecture: An Overview* (Farnham ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2013).

<sup>74</sup> Haseman, pp. 103–104.

<sup>75</sup> Haseman, pp. 103–104.



of practice) and the accompanying critical reflective practices.<sup>76</sup> Other authors, such as Barbara Bolt, suggest that in terms of research (particularly in postgraduate theses), greater focus should be placed on the 'praxical knowledge' or theories that are generated by a first-hand participation in the creative process ('handling materials in practice').<sup>77</sup> However, she goes on to argue that creative practice as research must also involve written reflection in order to open up a dialogue with existing practical and theoretical paradigms.<sup>78</sup>

Co-operative inquiry is similarly underpinned by an 'extended epistemology' that comprises of four different forms of knowledge as described by John Heron.<sup>79</sup> These forms of 'knowing' might be loosely mapped onto the descriptions of practice-led research above:

- Experiential - knowing through first-hand encounter with a person, place, or material. This 'immediacy of perception' is also described by Bolt's description of 'handling materials in practice' (after Heidegger)<sup>80</sup>
- Presentational - a means of expressing experiential knowing (artistic practice) often drawing on expressive forms such as storytelling or performance
- Propositional - the wider contextual understanding expressed by siting practice within a broader field and theoretical context
- Practical –the hands-on skills required to practice, as well as the interpersonal and organisational skills required to form and maintain the collaboration/participative knowing used in the inquiry process<sup>81</sup>

A revised research design for the third and final case study of this research proposes a shift towards a practice-led collaborative study, with the architect-researcher practicing alongside the performance-maker in a creation of a site-specific performance. This approach builds upon the performative / practice-led research model proposed by Haseman, Franz and others, but involves an adapted form of co-operative inquiry.<sup>82</sup> This combination of practice orientated approach and a cooperative (or collaborative) framework extends the existing research in two dimensions:

- practice is repositioned at the centre of the methodology (rather than object of study)
- research participants are repositioned as collaborative co-inquirers

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<sup>76</sup> Smith and Dean, pp. 6–7.

<sup>77</sup> Barbara Bolt, *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*, ed. by E. Barrett and B. Bolt (London ; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2007), pp. 29–30.

<sup>78</sup> Bolt, pp. 29–30.

<sup>79</sup> Heron and Reason, p. 183.

<sup>80</sup> Bolt, p. 30.

<sup>81</sup> Heron, p. 104.

<sup>82</sup> Heron, p. 23.

The interdisciplinary framework and spatial focus of this research has also an impact on the way that this practice-led inquiry is conceived. An emphasis is placed on the critical processes of collaboration, the processes of conceiving, designing and producing the site-specific performance, and the reception by public participants (rather than the performance event as the primary research output).

The evolving and creative nature of this research form makes it difficult to set out the precise details of methodology outside of the context of the case study (chapter 8). Haseman emphasises this in his description of the how practitioners “tend to ‘dive in’ and commence practising to see what emerges”.<sup>83</sup> While some sociologists may view this assertion as an attempt to avoid the methodological rigour required of social research, Haseman argues that any anxiety merely illustrates the strain that has been placed on qualitative research by attempting to incorporate and contain practice-led approaches within the same over-stretched category.<sup>84</sup> Despite the temptation to ‘dive in’ to an emergent account of the practice-led case study, there are a several important issues to be addressed in relation to the phases of collaborative practice (initiation, situation, conception, production, performance and evaluation). Returning to Heron, there are a number of key processes from the model of co-operative inquiry that help to understand these phases.

### **5.4.3 Initiating a collaborative practice-led case study**

Heron and Reason provide a detailed explanation of the processes required to launch a co-operative inquiry and suggest that most common method is a public call for participation by the primary researcher as initiator. Alternatively it is also possible that an existing interest or community group may actively seek a research partner.<sup>85</sup> A third route, where the primary researcher as initiator approaches an existing interest group or practitioner(s) is also possible, although Heron and Reason warn of the potential pitfalls of this route, particularly in terms of the existing (or competing) convictions or priorities that the interest group or practitioner(s) may hold.

Whatever the method of initiation, a particular importance is placed on the first induction meeting and ‘contracting process’ in this form of research – where shared goals and opportunities for mutual learning are established. This negotiation process is fundamental to this methodology, and requires both researchers and practitioners to set out their interest in the field of practice, the skillsets they each might bring to the project, the roles they may play, an idea of approximate timescales and structure, and some agreement around the type of research outputs and dissemination that will be

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<sup>83</sup> Haseman, p. 104.

<sup>84</sup> Haseman, pp. 101–102.

<sup>85</sup> Heron, pp. 38–40.

useful and accessible to both parties. The contracting process (which may take place over a number of meetings) may also cover decision-making processes and project leadership, recording practices, ways of working independently and then coming together to review. These may be sketched out during initial discussions but are just as likely to emerge and develop throughout the inquiry cycles. Reason highlights the importance of clarity and flexibility within this contracting stage in order to avoid conflicts or tensions further down the line.<sup>86</sup> It is vital that if the parties agree to proceed and form a group or partnership of co-researchers, they do so on the basis of a clear understanding of others' expectations and commitment.

#### **5.4.4 Performance-making and the inquiry cycle**

Within the transformative group of methodologies (including design research and co-operative inquiry), research is often structured according to variations of the inquiry cycle. These cycles involves the 'intentional interplay' between critical reflection or 'making sense' of the action and the direct experience and action itself. Heron describes the co-operative inquiry cycle as follows (whilst admitting that this is one approach amongst many possible others):<sup>87</sup>

- launch of the inquiry – setting out aims (launching statement) action plan, and a method for recording experiences
- action phase – carrying out investigation activities (independently or as a group) and recording notes of the experience
- reflection phase – reviewing the previous action phase and revising or modifying the inquiry aims for the next cycle

The inquiry continues in cyclical fashion towards a major reflection and analysis phase at an agreed endpoint, which is followed by post-inquiry collaboration on writing up or disseminating the research. While this structure is useful up to a point, it is unlikely that creative or artistic practices will fit neatly into this type of framework. As a complex and interdisciplinary practice, site-specific performance-making involves a broad range of activities and skills – creativity, spatial imagination, recruiting and organising participants, and project management, which might include managing limitations in time, budget, or skills. As has already been suggested, a strong reflexive element is central to performative, practice-led, or design research - with an emphasis on the importance of the researcher's presence within a process that is creative, iterative and reflective. Both Haseman and Franz draws upon Zeisel's descriptions of design as 'iterative cycles of imagining, representation and

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<sup>86</sup> REason (1988) in Heron, p. 39.

<sup>87</sup> Heron, pp. 49–50.

testing’ and Schon’s ‘reflection-in-action-on-action’ to describe this process.<sup>88</sup> How this reflective process actually emerges on the ground (and in collaboration with practitioners and co-researchers) is covered in more detail within the third case study (chapter 8).

#### 5.4.5 Participant experience

Practice-led research can encompass a breadth of creative art and design practices. Within this diverse field, different practices emphasise different forms of knowledge creation. Sullivan defines four interconnected ‘domains of inquiry’ (theoretical/ dialectical/ conceptual /contextual) that are combined within a practice-led research methodology.<sup>89</sup> For example, ‘contextual practices’ describes the critical intentions of arts practices that seek to bring about social change - an aim shared by many of the site-specific performance-makers referenced in the literature and practice review of this thesis. The nature of performance events in generating a dialogue with external participants (audiences) is also described by the domain of ‘dialectical practices’:

*“Dialectical practices are forms of inquiry whereby the artist-researcher explores the uniquely human process of making meaning through experiences that are felt, lived, reconstructed and reinterpreted”.*<sup>90</sup>

Meanings are made from participants’ interaction with the artwork (or event), and these meanings might then be further explored through conversations or other qualitative data collection methods (open-ended interviews, focus-groups, or questionnaires) set out in appendix 2. The motivations for including this additional layer of inquiry within a practice-led inquiry relates the general nature of performance as ephemeral, participatory and the particular nature of site-specific performance as shifting creative agency onto its participants.<sup>91</sup>

#### 5.4.6 Ethical considerations (part 2)

In redesigning the research methodology, the researcher’s responsibilities in terms of ethical codes of conduct and safe working practices must not be overlooked. Building upon the ethical considerations previously discussed in section 5.3.6, a number of additional important ethical considerations issues are raised by the collaborative and practice-led nature of this research.

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<sup>88</sup> Jill M Franz, ‘Arts-Based Research’, in *Researching Practice : A Discourse on Qualitative Methodologies*, ed. by Joy Higgs and others (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2010), pp. 217–26 (p. 219) <[https://www.sensepublishers.com/product\\_info.php?manufacturers\\_id=61&products\\_id=1007&osCsid=1a7>](https://www.sensepublishers.com/product_info.php?manufacturers_id=61&products_id=1007&osCsid=1a7>) [accessed 1 December 2011].

<sup>89</sup> Graeme Sullivan, ‘Making Space: The Purpose and Place of Practice-Led Research’, in *Practice-led research, research-led practice in the creative arts*, ed. by Hazel Smith and Roger T. Dean (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), pp. 41–65 (pp. 49–50).

<sup>90</sup> Sullivan, p. 50.

<sup>91</sup> McAuley, ‘Site-Specific Performance’.

Letherby warns against the simplistic assumption that a cooperative approach automatically puts each co-researcher on an 'equal' footing in terms of agency or power relations.<sup>92</sup> This is often not the case, particularly when the research is initiated by a researcher coming from the highly privileged (and funded) position of an academic institution. Rather than attempting to conceal or ignore potential imbalances, co-researchers should design a form of inquiry that mitigates these issues. Where this is not possible, the reflective account of the process should disclose the way in which power relations (between co-researchers) have impacted on the research. This highlights the reflexivity required on the part of the practice-led researcher - something that relies on developing a critical subjectivity and self-awareness.<sup>93</sup> Heron also acknowledges that a completely equal relationship between researcher and practitioner is not always possible and uses the term 'partial form' collaborative inquiry to refer to an arrangement where either researcher(s) or practitioner(s) have a reduced role in either the practice being researched or the research design and decision-making.<sup>94</sup> To what extent either role is reduced depends on the negotiation between researcher and practitioner. Within the context of this research as comprising of a number of other research activities (literature review, artistic audit, and prior case studies) and being set within the broader framework of a postgraduate thesis, it would appear difficult for any collaborative partner to take equal role in the broader research design and decision-making. Despite this, efforts have been made throughout the case study to seek the input of the collaborator at each stage of the practice-led research process.

Related to these issues are a number of further ethical considerations. Heron draws attention to a range of important concerns within his handbook, a number of which have particular significance within a creative collaboration:<sup>95</sup>

- the need to make space for co-researchers to have an opportunity to present ideas and gain feedback
- the importance of the emotional well-being of those involved in the project
- the importance of good interpersonal skills and the avoidance of condescending or confrontational language (or body language)
- opportunities to review the various aspects of the inquiry process

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<sup>92</sup> Gayle Letherby, 'Emancipatory Research', in *The Sage Dictionary of Social Research Methods*, ed. by Victor Jupp (London; Thousand Oaks, Calif: SAGE Publications, 2006), pp. 90–91.

<sup>93</sup> Egon Guba and Yvonna S Lincoln, 'Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research', in *The Landscape of Qualitative Research : Theories and issues*, ed. by Norman K Denzin and Yvonna S Lincoln, 2nd Ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA; London: Sage Publications, 2003), p. 263.

<sup>94</sup> Heron, pp. 24–26.

<sup>95</sup> Heron, pp. 65–71.

- the need to identify any opportunities for mutual learning and personal development within the research process

The third case study (chapter 8) involved a collaborative research design, with the (co)researchers and (co)practitioners involved in the design and launch of a public performance event. In August 2012 a new research ethics application was jointly submitted in relation to this case study and the additional work with public participants. Within the ethics application particular attention was given to the production of a public risk assessment, which was carried out and in collaboration with the co-researchers on the project. Further details of this are discussed in chapter 8, and the second ethics application and approval is included in appendix 5.

#### 5.4.7 Summary

The revised research methodology described in this section is built upon the extended epistemologies of practice-led research and collaborative modes of inquiry. This repositions the researcher as (co)creator of both the research and creative practice, and requires the development of collaborative methods of data creation, reflection, and analysis. A number of authors have warned of tensions created by attempting to fit practice-led research models within the traditional academic framework (and assessment criteria) of quantitative or qualitative scientific research.<sup>96</sup> Collaborative and practice-led research paradigms challenge conventions such as the pre-eminence of propositional knowledge as original contribution, individual work, the standardised written account as the primary output, and the assessment of whether an expected level of ‘doctorateness’ has been achieved.<sup>97</sup> Heron raises further potential issues of undermining the methods by having to compromise to fit with the requirements of postgraduate research degree programme.<sup>98</sup>

These issues are particularly pertinent within the context of this research thesis and its origins within a school of architecture - an academic environment that comprises of different forms of knowledge production. Methodologies and methods are frequently combined from artistic and design practice, the humanities, and the natural and social sciences, even though there is a tendency in academia to view these as incompatible.<sup>99</sup> These arguments also chime with Franz’s assertion that architectural researchers should be prepared to ‘defend and substantiate’ more creative ways of doing research,

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<sup>96</sup> Haseman, p. 104.

<sup>97</sup> Heron, pp. 32–33; Fredrik Nilsson and Halina Dunin-Woyseth, ‘Doctorateness in Design Disciplines. Negotiating Connoisseurship and Criticism in Practice-Related Fields’, *FORMakademisk*, 5 (2012) <<https://journals.hioa.no/index.php/formakademisk/article/view/499>> [accessed 18 December 2013].

<sup>98</sup> Heron, p. 72.

<sup>99</sup> J.M. Franz, ‘Arts-Based Research in Design Education’, in *Proceedings AQR Conference* (presented at the AQR Conference, Melbourne, 2005).

both within the immediate disciplinary community and beyond.<sup>100</sup> Architecture is a unique discipline - one that synthesises creative practice and multi- and trans-disciplinary research methodologies in ways that is perhaps not necessarily possible in other related fields (e.g. urban planning).

Finally, this thesis acknowledges the suggestion of Hindess and others that the majority of social research methodologies often bears only a 'tenuous connection' to what actually happens on the ground.<sup>101</sup> The nature of working in collaboration with others outside of the institution raises issues around the inherently unpredictable nature of everyday (inter)actions. This unpredictability is perhaps more pronounced when working alongside the often hectic and messy process of performance-making, particularly when combined with creative practice and the involvement of institutional partners and public participants within complex and contested sites. While this process can be exciting, it also raises a number of difficulties in relation to pinning down a fixed research design (as well as gaining ethical approval). To address some of these contradictions, Seale and others propose the term 'situated' research - proposing an approach to methodology that is more adaptive to the real-world situation. This concept acknowledges the fact that a lot of social research takes place out in real sites with real people, and instead of applying abstract concepts to a contingent (messy) situation of the real world, suggests that the site and human actors should always be kept in dialogue with methodological framework.<sup>102</sup> Reflexivity and an acknowledgment of where research design has failed or has been adapted in response to unexpected conditions or other agencies is a fundamental part of this approach.

## 5.5 Summary of cases and methods

<i>Methodology</i>	<i>Case Study</i>	<i>Research methods</i>					
		Practitioner interviews	Participant Observation	Participant Survey	First-hand Reflection	Document Analysis	Collaborative Practice
<b>Qualitative research on performance-makers</b>	<b>Mapping the City</b> (chapter 6)	√	√	√	√	√	-
	<b>The Anfield Home Tour</b> (chapter 7)	√	-	-	√	√	-

<sup>100</sup> Jill M Franz, p. 225.

<sup>101</sup> Hindess in Seale and others, p. 2.

<sup>102</sup> Seale and others, p. 7.

<b>Performative research with performance-makers</b>	<b>The Port of Sheffield</b> (chapter 8)	-	-	✓	✓	-	✓
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Table 6.2. Summary of methodology / research methods employed in each of the three case studies.



## 6 Mapping the City: Performing, witnessing, and (re)framing places in the Fruit Market, Hull

***Mapping the City* (2011).** Made by Slung Low. Written by James Phillips, Matthew David Scott and Jenny Worton.

*"The audience were led on a journey through the city from train station to sea. A woman leapt from the top of the building, characters disappeared on speed boats into the dark sea and everyone took a ride on a bus from 80 years ago. It was about time and how we remember people and why we stay in a place, or leave that place."*<sup>1</sup>

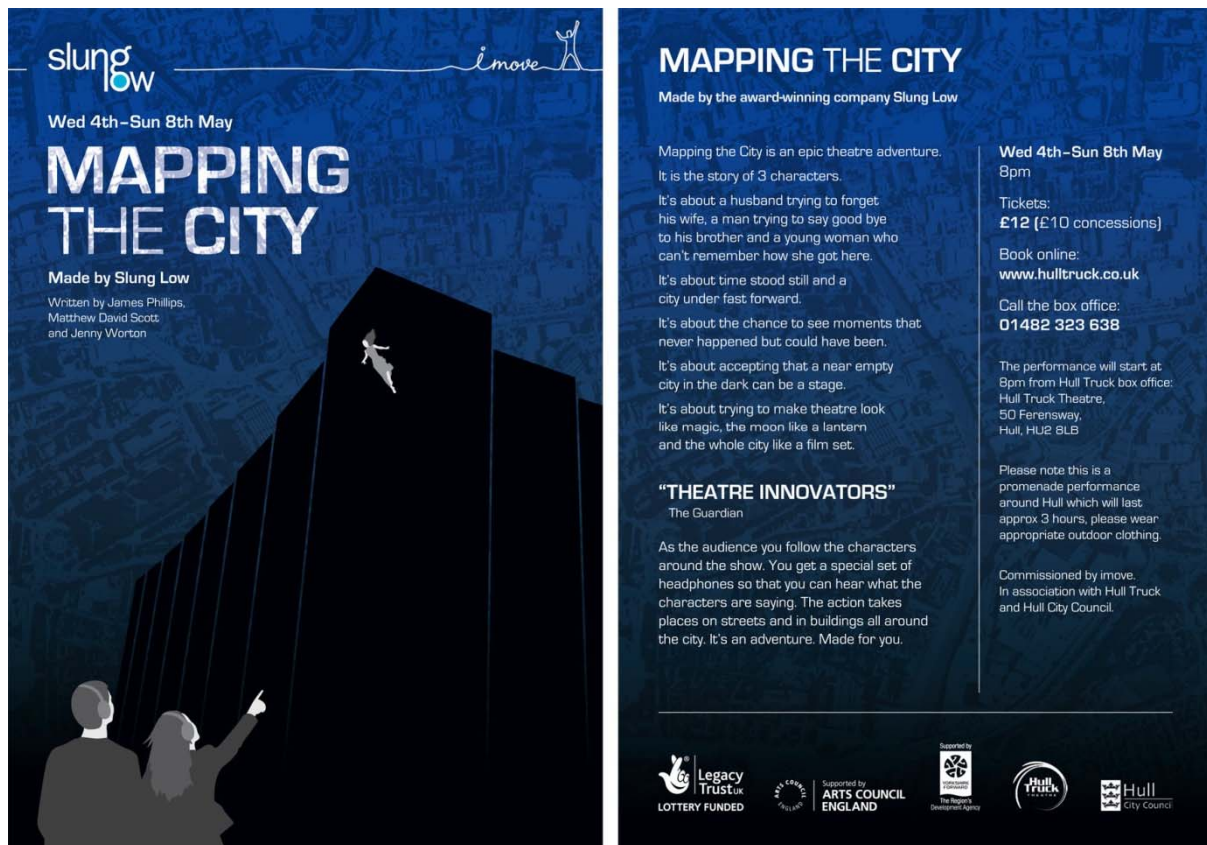


Figure 6.1. Promotional flyer for *Mapping the City*. Image ©Slung Low (used with permission).

<sup>1</sup> Slung Low, *Introduction to Mapping the City Archive*, 2011 <<http://slunglow.macmate.me/Archive/styled-11/index.html>> [accessed 1 July 2013].

## 6.0 Introduction

The first in the series of case-study performances is the 2011 production *Mapping the City* by Leeds-based theatre makers, Slung Low. The company, who have directed and produced a series of site-specific and outdoor theatrical works, were commissioned as part of the 'Cultural Olympiad Yorkshire' to create a large-scale peripatetic performance for the city of Hull. The performance was structured around three scripted narratives written specifically for the Hull performance by three different writers. The scripts, which intertwined with one another, were inspired by the history and stories of the Fruit Market area of the city and covered themes of love, time, memory, and place.

*Mapping the City* was performed over five nights in May 2011. On each evening of a performance, a group of 30 participants congregated at Hull Truck theatre, having bought tickets in advance at the theatre or online. Here, participants collected specialist listening equipment - wireless transmitters and headphones provided by Slung Low. Their journey began at the nearby train station, from where they followed the live actors through the streets of Hull. As well as following the performance on foot, participants received an audio feed via their wireless headphones. This was a mix of instructions (directly addressed to participants), the actors' dialogue, and a pre-recorded soundtrack. The action followed a predetermined route through the city centre, down towards the warehouses of the Fruit Market, and finally, to the marina. Although the walking route was interspersed with unexpected interludes, including a taxi ride and a journey aboard a vintage bus, the route broadly echoed Slung Low's first experience of arriving in the city - beginning at the station and being drawn down towards the water.<sup>2</sup>

### 6.0.1 Case Study identification and access

The research engagement with Slung Low came out of the preliminary survey of existing UK-based site-specific theatre and performance-makers. This search focused on practitioners who worked directly within urban spaces, creating peripatetic performances, tours or 'pervasive' games. A relatively small number of active companies were identified, with one of the most accessible in terms of proximity to RECITE being Slung Low, based in Leeds. The process of turning this initial interest in their practice into a research case-study was somewhat fortuitous in terms of timing, as contact was made with the company in April 2011, just as pre-production work on *Mapping the City* was about to commence on site in Hull.

Proximity to this performance was important for the viability of this as a case-study, particularly in terms of building a research relationship and gaining regular access to rehearsals, production and

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<sup>2</sup> 'Research Interview with Alan Lane, Artistic Director of Slung Low'.

live performances. Throughout April and May 2011, I was invited to join performance-makers Slung Low to observe and document the processes of production and rehearsal leading up to the performances, which included interviews with members of the company and Hull City Council, who co-commissioned the performance. This was followed by first-hand involvement (and reflection) as an participant within the live performance itself, and finally, through a study of participant responses to the performance.

### **6.0.2 Purpose of case study**

The purposes of *Mapping the City* as a research case study can be broadly summarised as follows:

- The siting of this performance in Hull, and more specifically the area around the Fruit Market, was an opportunity to inform the feasibility and scope of the study in terms of an explicit link between site-specific performance and urban regeneration.
- As a relative outsider to theatre and performance production, the willingness of Slung Low to grant first-hand access to observe and document these processes was an opportunity that enabled me to develop a greater awareness and sensitivity to the processes involved in designing and producing a large-scale site-specific performance.
- As the first significant opportunity to engage with the live production of site-specific performance, it enabled the testing of qualitative research methods, including data collection and analysis. This also included the development of specific research skills, such as carrying out interviews, observations and engaging individual participants with a very limited amount of contact time before and after the event, as well as designing, developing and testing an online environment for gathering the experiential accounts of participants.
- The analysis of participant experiences and discussions with the performance-makers and other participants provided an early opportunity to clarify the research questions and inform the research design, methodology and selection of future case studies.

## **6.1 SITE**

Documents detailing the recent history of regeneration in the Fruit Market were kindly provided by Integreat Plus - the legacy company established in 2011 to take on the work of Yorkshire Forward's 'Centre of Excellence for Regeneration, Renaissance and Place Making' following the abolition of the Regional Development Agencies in 2012.

### 6.1.1 Spatial context

The distinctive character of Hull (or to give the city its full title, Kingston-upon-Hull) is a product of its geography - its relationship at the confluence of the Humber Estuary and the River Hull and historical significance as the major port on the east coast of the UK. Even the city's questionable reputation in the national media is arguable product of being a city on the edge – you don't pass through the city to get anywhere else, making it more difficult for the city and its residents to attract people to Hull to challenge negative stereotypes.

The contemporary urban character of Hull has been shaped by access to and control of water. It was the location of Hull that enabled medieval merchants to trade with Scandinavia, the Baltic, and the rest of mainland Europe. In medieval times, the old city walls were protected by a moat, a line of defence that would become transformed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century into the distinctive 'ring of docks'. Trade and passenger shipping boomed as the power of steam shipping linked Hull with the rest of the world. Today, the distinctive form of the ring of docks is much more difficult to recognise due to the filling-in of the largest dock (Queen's Dock) in the 1930s to create Queen's Gardens. This infilling was the end result of a longer-term shift of the shipping industry down the coast to what is now known as the Port of Hull. The city's immediate relationship with the water has also been affected by the damage caused by flooding. The whole of Hull City Centre is covered by the two most severe categories of flood risk outside of a functioning flood plain.<sup>3</sup> Along the River Hull, newer structures such as tidal barrier have been constructed to protect the city from the considerable flood risk posed by tidal surges. The post-industrial decline of the fishing industry and the relocation of the docks have undoubtedly changed the character of Hull as a working port. The city centre is now most clearly defined in terms of retail activity. Among the shops, several imposing Victorian buildings and monuments hark back to its heyday during the Industrial Revolution. Beyond the immediate centre, the city boasts a growing university campus, a historic waterfront and rebuilt marina, alongside the new cultural and architectural attractions of 'The Deep' aquarium and the new Scale Lane ('Pinball') Bridge. Hull is a city that takes great pride in both its local sports teams (football and rugby league) and cultural activity, with a particular focus on the outdoor festivals and arts events that take over the city centre every year in September. As Helen Thackery, of Hull City Council suggests, *"you only have to spend a few hours in the city to have your preconceptions challenged"*. Nonetheless, with relatively few people from outside of the East Riding area visiting, negative preconceptions of the

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<sup>3</sup> Yorkshire Forward, Roger Tym & Partners and Surface Architects, 'Hull Fruit Market Development Brief', 2010, p. 15.

city have tended to persist. Recent VisitBritain data suggests that Hull averaged 51,000 overseas visitors between 2010 and 2012 - considerably less than other UK cities of comparable size.<sup>4</sup>



Figure 6.2. Kingston-upon-Hull city centre. Image: author.

Hull is also said to be a city divided by occupation. Traditionally, if you lived in the east you were a docker, and you lived in the west you were a fisherman. According to Thackery, it is still common for people who are born in the west remain in the west and vice versa. Perhaps as a result, the city centre has become the only place where the whole population mixes socially.<sup>5</sup> Hull city centre is a mixture of grand Victorian architecture and sprawling retail, a noticeable proportion of which is vacant. Empty and derelict space units are even more evident in and around the historic Fruit Market district - the area explored by the *Mapping the City* performance. The city's important historic and cultural ties to the waterfront have been eroded by the collapse of both the docking and

<sup>4</sup> See <<http://www.visitbritain.org/insightsandstatistics/inboundvisitorstatistics/latestdata/index.aspx>> [accessed 4 November 2013].

<sup>5</sup> Research interview with Helen Thackery, Events Manager at Hull City Council, 2011.



fishing industries, and the physical link to the Humber has been severed by the Castle Street dual carriageway. As a result of this significant physical (and psychological?) barrier, the docks and the historic Fruit Market and quayside feel divided from the centre, and a potentially vibrant part of the city has become chronically undervalued.



Figure 6.3. View looking north through the Fruit Market from Victoria Pier – towards the Holy Trinity Church and the old town. Image: Author.

### 6.1.2 The Fruit Market

The Fruit Market is a fascinating part of Hull. The character of the area is defined by its distinctive urban form, the role it has played in the historical economic and physical development of East Riding, and the way that the area mediates the connection between city and water. The current urban form and character of the area are also a legacy of the environmental, cultural and socio-economic influences upon the old town and the docks throughout the recent history of the city.

#### Historical and spatial context

Rather than one distinctive district, the historic development of Fruit Market should be considered in terms of two distinct sections that are divided along the line of Humber Street. The northern section of the Fruit Market has been an integral part of Hull's core since the medieval city was established in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. This is evident in the unimproved medieval streets, such as Sewer Lane, Finkle Street and Blanket Row (the site of the warehouse occupied by Slung Low), with distinctly narrow

plot widths and connecting passageways. The land to the south of Humber Street was originally beyond the line of the medieval city walls and only reclaimed from the sea through a slow process of spoil dumping followed by active land reclamation in the early 1800s.<sup>6</sup> This is most noticeable in the widely different street widths which exist. More recent Georgian streets, such as Queen Street and Wellington Street, are much broader in nature with larger plots and grander architecture interspersed between smaller scale shops and townhouses. The coming of the railways during the Victorian period, and their use to service the docks, also required the widening of certain streets for wagon movements.<sup>7</sup>



Figure 6.4. A view of some of the existing warehouses on Humber Street. This photograph is taken from one of a number of 'Lanes' in the Fruit Market - small alleyways that link the larger streets together. Image: Author.

The name of the area derives from the long association with local wholesalers of fresh fruit and vegetables. A group of traders became established in the area around Humber Street in the late 1800s, buying foreign produce that arrived at Humber Dock and distributing local farm produce to other markets across the Humber. Somewhat surprisingly, the wholesale markets continued to survive long after the closure of the docks and the relocation of shipping down to the Port of Hull,

<sup>6</sup> Hull City Council, 'Old Town (Southern Part) : Conservation Area Character Appraisal', 2005, p. 18 <<http://www.arc-online.co.uk/retrieve/290c488330b5a7c6253040538e124644>> [accessed 11 November 2013].

<sup>7</sup> Hull City Council, p. 6.

with several purpose built fruit and vegetable warehouses operating along Humber Street until very recently.<sup>8</sup>

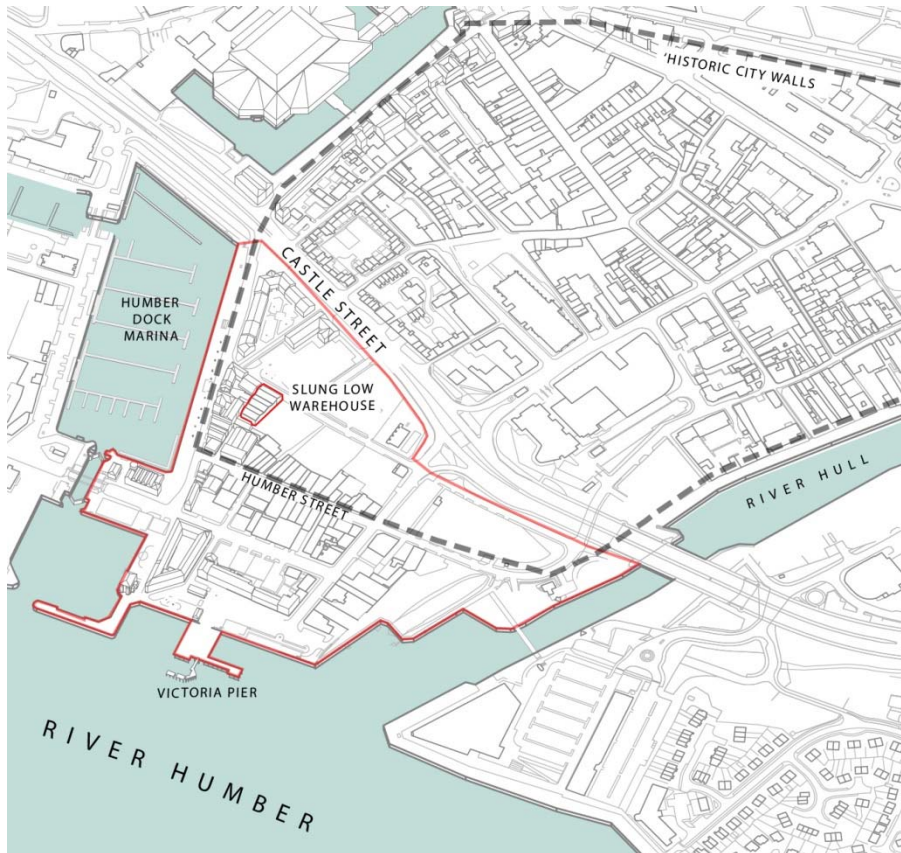


Figure 6.5. Map detail indicating the area of the Hull Fruit Market and the relationship to the historic city walls. Image: author.

Heavy Second World War bomb damage and subsequent post-war clearance and redevelopment have had a significant impression on the historic character of the area, leaving a somewhat jumbled assortment of building forms, typologies, and architectural styles. In spite this and further nondescript developments in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the whole of the Fruit Market area is designated within the southern part of the Hull Old Town Conservation Area.<sup>9</sup> However, urban planning decisions in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (particularly the planning of Castle Street) have eroded the relationship with the main part of the Conservation Area in the city centre, with pedestrian connectivity severely affected. This and several other socio-economic factors have contributed to a

<sup>8</sup> Hull City Council, pp. 22–23.

<sup>9</sup> The duties of the Local Planning Authority Planning with respect to the designation and protection of historic Conservation Areas is designated by (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012.



general decline of the area, which has been described by regeneration agencies using the language of ‘persistent market failures’.<sup>10</sup>

### Recent regeneration

The 2004 Hull City Centre Masterplan earmarked the Fruit Market as a new residential district and leisure destination. This commercially-led concept was led by ‘Citybuild’ – Hull’s urban regeneration company, which was funded by Hull City Council and Yorkshire Forward the Regional Development Agency (RDA). Their vision for the Fruit Market could be considered as epitomising the type of inner-city economic and social regeneration described by the authors of the Urban Renaissance policies (described in chapter 4):

*“The Fruit Market Area will be a lively community providing a mix of city living, workspace, hotels, leisure and shopping, as well as a major new public area. The Fruit Market Area will welcome creative industries and smaller businesses enhancing its old town charm and encouraging diversity. Boutique shops and a variety of restaurants, cafés and bars will be located along Humber Street creating an ideal place to go in the evening and at weekends.”<sup>11</sup>*

As Amin and others have suggested, the language used to promote this vision of a mixed-use waterfront district typifies the consumption-led model of urban regeneration that flourished under New Labour. It was built around the aim of increasing land values in run-down former industrial areas, while at the same time servicing the needs of an expanding urban middle class.<sup>12</sup> Despite repeated regeneration efforts, this model had so far failed to take hold within the Fruit Market. The 2010 Yorkshire Forward Design Brief document suggests that this failure was due to a cumulative impact of a number of issues:<sup>13</sup>

- the incompatibility between commercial and leisure-led urban vision of regeneration alongside the existing wholesale fruit and vegetable markets
- ‘market failures’ and lack of investment - whereby properties have been left to decline by landowners in the hope that holding out for a later sale will result in higher land and property values
- the constraints and costs associated with redeveloping a large and varied building stock within a Conservation Area

<sup>10</sup> Yorkshire Forward, Roger Tym & Partners and Surface Architects, p. 117.

<sup>11</sup> Hull City Council and Citybuild, ‘City Centre Masterplan’ (Hull Citybuild, 2004) <[http://www.hullcc.gov.uk/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/HULL\\_MEANS\\_BUSINESS/HMB\\_BUSINESS/HMB\\_REGEN/HMB\\_CITY%20MASTERPLAN/CITYCENTREMASTERPLAN\\_V1.PDF](http://www.hullcc.gov.uk/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/HULL_MEANS_BUSINESS/HMB_BUSINESS/HMB_REGEN/HMB_CITY%20MASTERPLAN/CITYCENTREMASTERPLAN_V1.PDF)> [accessed 4 July 2013].

<sup>12</sup> Amin, *Cities for the Many Not the Few*, pp. 6–7.

<sup>13</sup> Yorkshire Forward, Roger Tym & Partners and Surface Architects, p. 117.

In 2007, Hull Citybuild and their partners (Yorkshire Forward, Hull City Council, English Partnerships - now the Homes and Communities Agency) organised a two-stage competition for the regeneration of the Fruit Market. Project consortia (consisting of a commercial developer working alongside architects and urban planners) were invited to submit proposals that incorporated both economic and design components. An open first-stage of the competition was followed by a shortlist and second stage, where the teams took part in workshops with stakeholders while they developed the schemes. Conceived at the height of the UK property boom, the second stage brief described the Fruit Market as 'one of the most exciting city centre waterfront, heritage-led development opportunities in the country'.<sup>14</sup> The winning consortium was backed by Igloo Regeneration (the 'sustainable' property investment and urban regeneration arm of Aviva) and led by a team of architects and urban designers including Sarah Wigglesworth Architects, Bauman Lyons Architects and Surface Architects. Their vision for 'sympathetic' contemporary housing and commercial units was inspired by fruit packaging - "orange boxes, palettes, crates, cardboard boxes, containers, nets, baskets and bundles became the drivers for exploring how buildings also package and protect our lives".<sup>15</sup>



Figure 6.6. Proposed mixed-use development of the Fruit Market. Image © Sarah Wigglesworth Architects (used with permission).

In 2008, the credit crunch and resulting economic crisis resulted in falling margins and increased risk across the property development sector, and the Fruit Market scheme was deemed to be

<sup>14</sup> Citybuild and Yorkshire Forward, 'Hull Fruit Market: Second Stage Competition Brief', 2007.

<sup>15</sup> Sarah Wigglesworth Architects, 'Regeneration of Hull Fruit Market', *Sarah Wigglesworth Architects* <<http://www.swarch.co.uk/projects/hull-fruit-market/info/>> [accessed 11 November 2013].

unprofitable. At around the same time, earlier plans to relocate the wholesale fruit and vegetable markets to a purpose-built facility in west Hull went ahead, leaving many of the warehouses empty in anticipation of the now-stalled regeneration plans.<sup>16</sup> A 2010 development brief and design guidance produced by Hull City Council and Yorkshire Forward in conjunction with some of the winning consortium partners (Surface Architects and Roger Tym & Partners) was carried forward the urban design principles of the winning scheme. This Design Brief sought to capture and carry forward many of the urban design principles that were contained within the earlier proposals for the purpose of helping to shape any proposed future development. However, this process was being carried out in the context of a continuing decline in property investment and the housing market, as well as a change of Government and the abolition of the Regional Development Agencies (including the RDA Yorkshire Forward). By the time Slung Low arrived on site to create *Mapping the City* in 2011, the financial model and political momentum behind the Fruit Market regeneration proposals appeared to have all but dissipated.

### 6.1.3 Funding (opportunity)

Curated by newly-created organisation iMove and programmed by Tessa Gordziejko, the Yorkshire & Humber Cultural Programme for the London 2012 Olympiad was conceived as a programme of events designed to 'celebrate movement through a broad range of art forms'.<sup>17</sup> In 2010, Slung Low were invited to become part of the cultural programme as one of the iMove 'curated strands' and the company were commissioned to develop a large-scale site-specific work for Yorkshire & Humber. Following further development and input from iMove in negotiation with Hull City Council, Hull Fruit Market was proposed as the site for the performance, and a production 'residency' was set up in a vacant warehouse in the Fruit Market.

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<sup>16</sup> 'End of Era for Fruit Market Wholesalers', *Hull Daily Mail*, 13 November 2009  
<<http://legacy.thisishullandeastriding.co.uk/End-era-Fruit-Market-wholesalers/story-11952219-detail/story.html>> [accessed 11 November 2013].

<sup>17</sup> imove, 'About Imove', *imove: Yorkshire's cultural programme for London 2012*, 2011  
<<http://www.imoveand.com/about-imove/>> [accessed 8 July 2013].

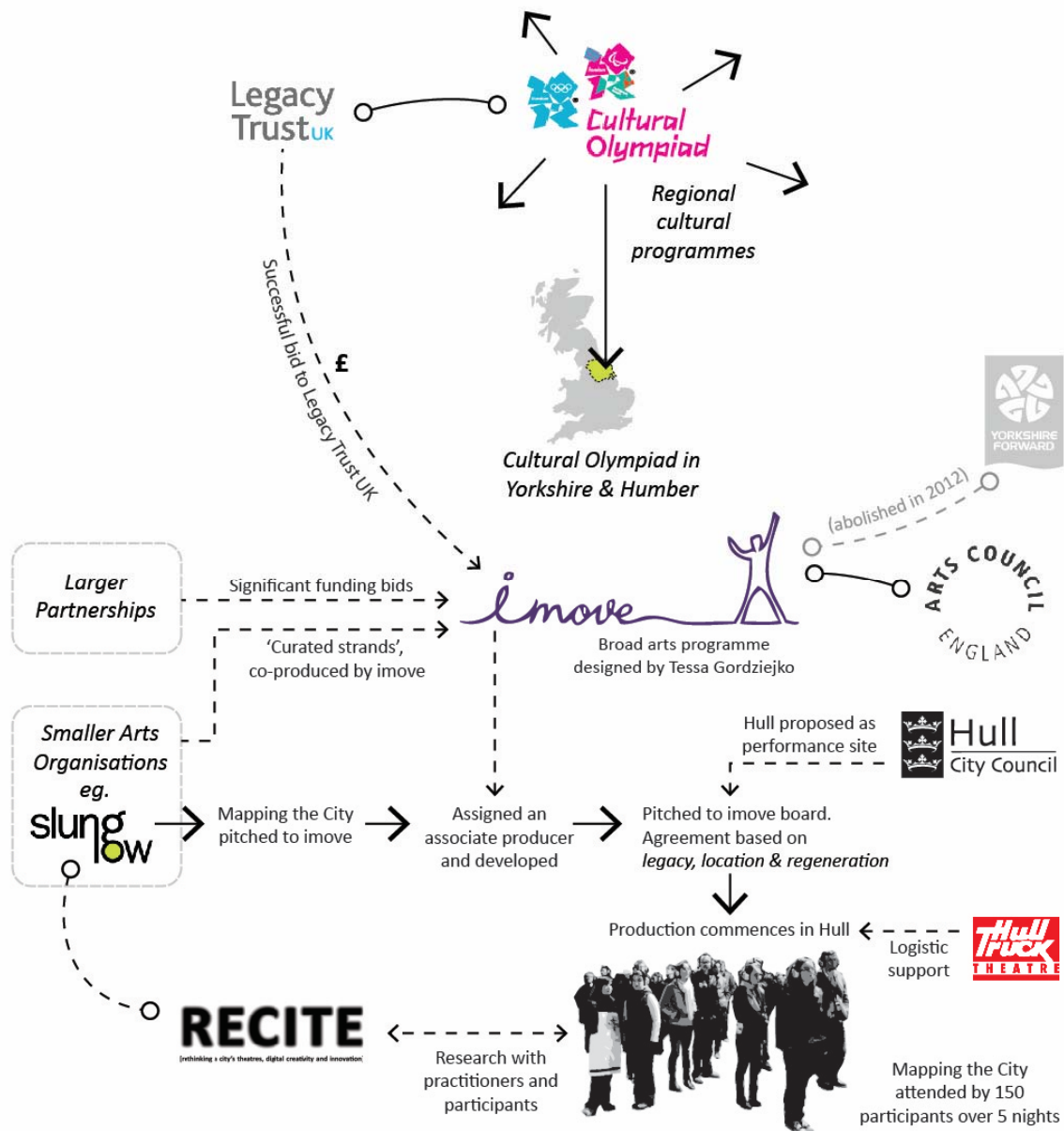


Figure 6.7. Mapping the City - stakeholder and funding map. Image: author.

Interviews with Hull City Council revealed a number of motivations for supporting this form of experimental theatre (in terms of both financial and logistical support). Hull City Council Events Manager, Helen Thackery, suggests that the outdoor cultural events, such as the annual Freedom Festival and the 'Fire Garden' displays of French theatre company Carabosse, have had a number of beneficial effects on the city centre, including a boost for central businesses, a noticeable reduction in crime (during the events themselves), as well as certain health and well-being effects of bringing families and groups of people together and walking around outside.<sup>18</sup> In terms of the invitation for

<sup>18</sup> Research Interview with Helen Thackery, Events Manager at Hull City Council, 2011.

Slung Low to come and work in the city, one of the main aims was to build upon the city's reputation for outdoor arts and to further broaden their 'cultural offer'. A key part of this intent was the idea that more experimental theatre and performance might attract a new range of (culturally-aware) visitors into the city for the first time, challenging the 'mixed' preconceptions of Hull. Beyond these broader drivers of visitor numbers and the local economy, Thackery suggested that this type of site-specific performance might also help to 'reimagine' the future of the Fruit Market:

*"What we're conscious of in the city is the area that's used for the (Slung Low) project was going to be part of a multi-million pound redevelopment, and once Yorkshire Forward started to go down it was basically withdrawn from that and it just seems such a shame... I can see that area being so many things other than another set of block of flats or another marina development. So what Hull City Council did was to try to bring in something that would carry on from Freedom Festival and Carabosse and make people use that area for what it really is - a different and diverse zone."*<sup>19</sup>

This reference to using the Fruit Market as a 'different and diverse' zone may simply refer to smaller-scale, independent businesses, cultural and creative uses, cafés etc. that are being actively sought after by the city and also supported by the 2004 masterplan and proposals in the Fruit Market Development Briefs. However, in making this reference to a one-off site-specific theatre production such as *Mapping the City*, Thackery's comments begin to suggest the further potential of live performance to spark the critical imagination and thus re-envision what the site could be in future.

## 6.2 CONCEPTION

### 6.2.1 Slung Low

As an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation (NPO), Slung Low have developed a strong regional and national reputation for their site-specific and experimental performance practice. Prior to developing the Hull performance, Slung Low had made peripatetic and outdoor performances for a number of British cities. Their previous work can be broadly divided into two categories. The first is performed through regular smaller-scale engagement events - aimed at documenting the stories and memories of local participants. This form of work, which might be categorised using the model 'Practitioners and Participants: Gathering, sharing, or telling (stories)' (see chapter 5), sees the team take the Slung Low 'Knowledge Emporium' to different communities across the UK. Once set up in a prominent public place, Slung Low invite people in to share local knowledge and stories, which are exchanged for sweets.

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<sup>19</sup> Thackery.



Figure 6.8. Slung Low's 'Knowledge Emporium' stationed on the South Bank, London in 2012. Image: © Slung Low.

While the company have been involved in the creation of a range of other performance events at a range of scales, the second category of work is their larger-scale outdoor performance, where participants are led around the streets and public spaces of a city by groups of performers. One of the most distinguishing features of these large-scale performances is the use of wireless headphones, which has become somewhat of a motif for the company. Headphones and wireless transmitting devices are worn by all participants, linking them up to the miked-up voices of live actors (both seen and unseen). This technique not only overcomes the potentially difficult technical issue of projecting audio to a large audience outdoors, but enables the production team to mix the live voices of actors with pre-recorded soundtrack and other audio effects.

The company is based in Holbeck, an area close to the centre of Leeds where they have established the Holbeck Underground Ballroom (HUB). This space, in a formerly derelict railway arch, now acts as an office and base but has been refurbished and fitted out over a number of years through the efforts of the company themselves. As well as hosting Slung Low's production and rehearsal

activities, the HUB is well-used performance space and hosts a wide range of performers and community events, and is a space that can be offered to local performers at piecemeal cost.<sup>20</sup>

### 6.2.2 Artistic convictions

As well as being flexible in terms of form and scale, Slung Low do not limit themselves to one strict definition of site-specificity. This is demonstrated in their reimagining of the sites around Salford Quays as a battleground for *Beyond the Frontline* (2009), and *Anthology* (2010) in Liverpool, which took audiences on seven different journeys, each a performance following a script inspired by the city. In attempting to describe their approach to site, Artistic Director Alan Lane has employed the term 'magic-real'. For Lane, site is the everyday reality we often take for granted, and the role of the performance-maker is to inject or overlay fantastical experience or human drama in or onto that reality. However in discussing past works, Lane also talks of 'dragging' site into the fiction, and using the site as a stand-in for a set, as a filmmaker or cinematographer might:

*"If I'm doing a show about an underground multi-storey car park I could build one but if someone's already done it for me I may as well just get on with it - and the good news about the real one (car park) is it that looks like it, smells like it, touches like it and everything"*<sup>21</sup>

Slung Low describe the evolution of their larger-scale form of outdoor 'peripatetic' performances as "stacking up like a conversation... perhaps about with how far you can push theatre in the UK".<sup>22</sup> Following the completion of *Anthology* in Liverpool in 2010, the next step in this 'conversation' was the concept of an 'epic' journey – a performance that would weave a number of stories and sites together for one experience that would take place across a whole city.

*"The challenge was to try and make something that could be so transformative and encompassing you could spend 4 hours in a fiction – be fed, be moved, get on transport, all sorts of things and at the end feel that the world can't possibly be the same because you have had this experience."*<sup>23</sup>

The journey between that concept - perhaps the most ambitious the company had considered undertaking - and the opening of the performance in Hull Fruit Market, was far from straightforward. Although Slung Low had developed an overarching concept for a show called *Mapping the City*, both Lane and producer Laura Clark suggested that they couldn't provide the

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<sup>20</sup> Alan Lane, Follow-up (analysis) interview with Alan Lane, Artistic Director of Slung Low, 2011.

<sup>21</sup> Research Interview with Alan Lane, Artistic Director of Slung Low'.

<sup>22</sup> Research Interview with the Alan Lane, Artistic Director of Slung Low (2011).

<sup>23</sup> Lane, 'Research Interview with Alan Lane, Artistic Director of Slung Low'.

commissioning body iMove with any more firm details prior to developing the piece while embedded within the site. With this research and development phase requiring some initial funding in order to develop a piece and, therefore, provide proof of concept, a level of mutual trust was required between the performance-makers and commissioning body.

Accounts from key members of Slung Low also suggest an initial degree of resistance to taking their 'epic' model to Hull. Prior to visiting the city, Lane raised concerns as to whether Hull could 'hold' this scale of performance - a sentiment that appeared to echo the earlier descriptions of Hull as suffering from a lot of 'bad press'.<sup>24</sup> Despite these reservations, Slung Low agreed to look at the feasibility of developing a large-scale performance in Hull in 2011. This decision appears to have been made under some pressure from iMove, with both Lane and Clark suggesting that Cultural Olympiad funding would only be offered on the condition that Slung Low agreed to this location.<sup>25</sup>

### 6.3 PRODUCTION

#### 6.3.1 Scripting

Much of Slung Low's previous site-specific work has involved collaboration between their in-house design and production team and a number of external writers, who are invited in for particular projects to develop the stories and script the performances. *Mapping the City* once again built upon this process by appointing three different writers (James Phillips, Jenny Worton, and Matthew David Scott), whose stories were to be linked together and woven into one performance. As newcomers to the city of Hull, the scriptwriting began through a process of visits, where the writers would walk the streets with Slung Low's Artistic Director. Lane described this process as a form of 'wandering' - gathering snatches from overhead dialogue, local expressions and 'so and so lived here' signs, while being guided by key landmarks and quirks of the city. Although one might be tempted to draw comparisons between these 'wanderings' and the psychogeographic walking practices associated with the Surrealists or Situationists, these walks were more purposeful, seeking out the more 'interesting' viewpoints, backdrops, and potential stop-off and gathering points. Lane describes these walks as playing a significant role in informing an overall sense of place within the three scripts. At the same time, Lane suggests that the route of the performance mirrors the route of their first encounter with the city - that of a day visitor arriving at the train station and making their way down to the sea.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Lane, 'Research Interview with Alan Lane, Artistic Director of Slung Low'; Thackery.

<sup>25</sup> Lane, 'Research Interview with Alan Lane, Artistic Director of Slung Low'.

<sup>26</sup> Lane, 'Research Interview with Alan Lane, Artistic Director of Slung Low'.



### 6.3.2 Spatial negotiations

As well as guiding participants through the streets and public spaces of the city centre and the marina, Slung Low proposed to take the performance in and around a number of the derelict warehouses of the Fruit Market. This process involved rounds of negotiation, involving both the City Council and relevant landowners. Slung Low producer Laura Clark describes the mixed reactions to this process - while some organisations reacted very positively, others were much more wary, with commercial or private business-owners particularly nervous because of ‘uncertainty’ around what this kind of artistic work might entail.<sup>27</sup> The negotiation of access (and the resulting permissions or refusals) required subsequent adaptations in structure, route, timings, and script in order to shape the performance around the spaces that the company had been granted access to. This was just one aspect of the dramaturgical ‘conversation’ between the emerging performance and the site, and was followed by a further rehearsal process to develop the interactions between actors, vehicles, scenographic elements, and dialogue - all taking place within a dynamic urban context. According to Lane, the success of these timings on the night is fundamental to get right if the company are to successfully create the ‘magic-real’ sensation that underpins their outdoor, peripatetic work.



Figure 6.9. Director Alan Lane walks through the performance route and script with actors Catherine Shepherd and Lucy Hind. Image: Author.

<sup>27</sup> Laura Clark, Research interview with Laura Clark, Producer of Slung Low, 2011.

Given that these spatial negotiations were so complex, it was somewhat surprisingly that physical maps or mapping software was rarely used by the company. This absence of spatial documentation of the route became apparent when printed maps of the city centre and Fruit Markets were brought to the initial meeting with the company (to aid the documentation of the route of the performance for the purposes of the case-study research). This sparked a discussion around the use of maps within the production of their performance practice, with members of the company aware that they were working from their own spatial interpretation of the city and performance route - rather than a 'proper' map of the city. This episode prompted a tentative request from the company for me to bring them some copies of the maps on my next visit. Although the offer of these 'proper' maps felt somehow incongruous with some of the theoretical grounding of the research (particularly in light of the discussions in chapter 3), this interaction did have an added benefit in terms of building a research relationship with the company, and the maps continued to be pinned up on the walls of the Slung Low warehouse throughout my subsequent visits.

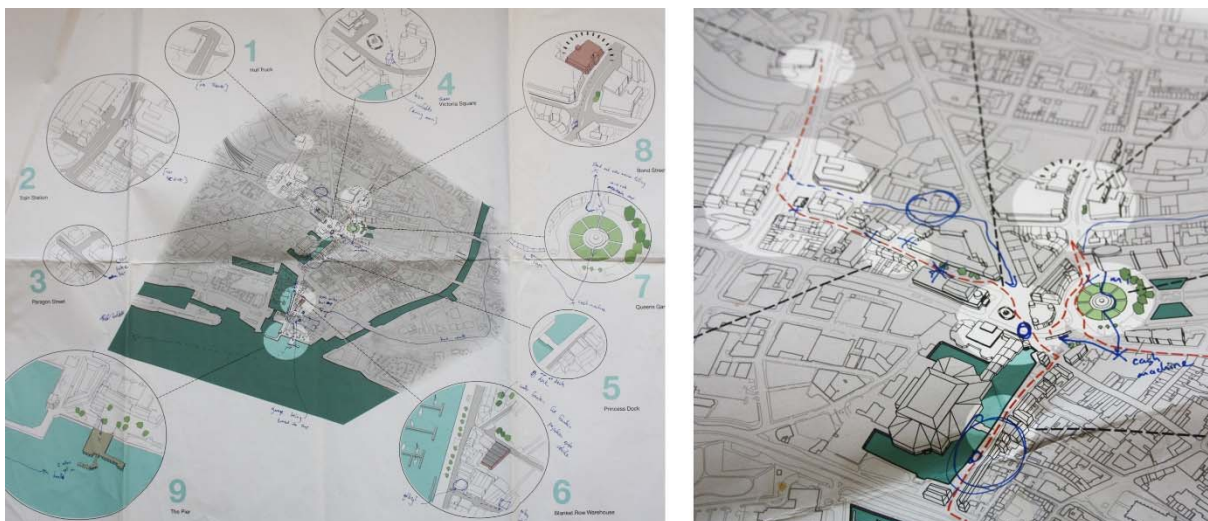


Figure 6.10. RECITE maps annotated during conversations with members of the Slung Low cast and crew. Image: author.

### 6.3.3 Residency and participation

The majority of the initial research engagements (practitioner interviews and observations) with Slung Low took place during their 'residency', during which time the company occupied a previously vacant warehouse in the Fruit Market, loaned to Slung Low by a local business. For the four weeks leading up to the performance this warehouse was the base for rehearsals, production, set-building, team meetings, and socialising. During this period there were a number of opportunities to meet and informally talk to members of the company, as well as observing production and rehearsal sessions first-hand. These engagements revealed some of the working methods of company, which operates as a large collective of artists, technicians and performers. Many of the individuals involved



have been associated with *Slung Low* over a number of years, but are only brought on board for a specific role within the production phase.

This month in residency was not only as a way for the company to immerse themselves in the city, but also an informal way to familiarise the city with *Slung Low*. Lane talked fondly of the many informal encounters and conversations that resulted from the very public processes of rehearsing outdoors in the site – from heckles or people simply wanting to know what they were doing, to in-depth conversations about the nature of contemporary theatre. More formal partnerships emerged through the involvement of Hull City Council and the local college in the performance, with students invited to help out with set and costume-making, local people and charities donating props, and a local group of amateur performers making up the chorus.



Figure 6.11. The *Slung Low* production (and caravan) inside the warehouse in the Fruit Market. Image: Author.

Despite the laid-back appearance of the *Slung Low* warehouse with its borrowed sofas and caravan, the production team were always extremely busy during visits, and reported often working on site for 12 hours or more and up to seven days a week. The walls were lined with long lists of tasks - permissions required, routes to check, missing props and costume elements, as well as detailed schedules listing deadlines for specific tasks and the dates on which different actors were due to arrive in the city. As the performances approached, it became apparent that living in Hull and being

on site every day for such long hours to prepare for the performance had placed a certain level of stress on the company. In the face of this pressure, Lane described the importance of coming together at the end of each day for group meals - to socialise, relax and prepare for the next day. The process of arranging these evening meals provided some additional anecdotal evidence about the challenges facing a vision of city centre based around evening activity and café-bar. Lane described how the company would regularly struggle to find a café or restaurant prepared to stay open late and cater for them (particularly on weekday evenings), even when the company would be bringing along the whole 25-strong production team.<sup>28</sup>

In the weeks leading up to the performance, I had been warmly welcomed to observe the 'behind the scenes' processes as a researcher and to join the many other performers and members of the production team who were coming and going from the warehouse. As the company geared up towards the preview night, I was keen to be on site as much as possible to observe the preparations that were required and witness the final transformation of the original ideas to the final performance. At this time, it became apparent that there was a risk of my presence as an observer impeding some of the the last-minute work of the production team. From the time that the first 'tech' rehearsal (akin to a dress rehearsal) was ready, there was a switch in my positioning and an explicit agreement that I was to observe the performances from the perspective of a participant (audience-member). Despite this switch, it was also agreed that I could approach other participants prior to the performance (in Hull Truck Theatre) in order to discuss the participant questionnaire, as long as it did not delay the start time of the performance. This shift in my role helped the company to manage the complex behind the scenes activity and as a researcher and invited guest of the company it was important to understand the reasons for this and to be fully cooperative with this request. As discussed in the previous chapter, an important aspect of the methodology employed is a requirement for the researcher to carry out a shift from observer to participant. While this shift potentially poses some difficulties, it is essential to complement the other data collection methods with first-hand experience of the live performance (and subsequent reflections). This moment in the Hull case study was a further important reminder about the flexibility required when carrying out an ethnographic-type engagement within the midst of professional performance practice.

## 6.4 PERFORMANCE

### 6.4.1 Performance documentation

Like many professional performance-makers, the company always commission a professional photographer to document their work. As well as appearing in the Slung Low online archive, these

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<sup>28</sup> Alan Lane, 'Follow-up (analysis) Interview with Alan Lane, Artistic Director of Slung Low', July 2011.

photographs may be important requirements of the funding body or local authority in terms of illustrating the reporting process. This was no different in Hull, and Yorkshire-based photographer Simon Warner was commissioned to document the preview night of *Mapping the City*. Alongside the basic photographic record, Slung Low expressed a preference for other, more creative, approaches to documentation – with the performance document embedded, referenced, or created within the performance itself.<sup>29</sup> As Lane suggests - “if documentation is disconnected from the performance it becomes something else – more of a marketing tool”.<sup>30</sup> Despite this ambition to challenge and extend the nature of traditional documentation, there was also an admission from the company that this approach was not always possible, particularly given the pressures of writing and production, as well as the rush to clear up the site and to move onto the next project. In the case of *Mapping the City*, more ambitious plans for documentation appear to have been placed on hold in order to ensure the live event itself was ready on time.

#### 6.4.2 First-hand account

The following account is written from the dual position of researcher and participant, and is a response to the first performance (preview night) of *Mapping the City* on 29th May 2011. The documentary photographs used to illustrate the text are all copyright Slung Low and Simon Warner, and are used with permission from the performance-maker.

#### MAPPING THE CITY

*The lobby of the Hull Truck Theatre is filled with a buzz of nervous excitement. As groups of twos and threes arrive, they are welcomed by members of the production team who issue headphones and digital receivers with instructions of how they will be used throughout the performance. The receiving equipment, which is worn on a lanyard around the neck, feels satisfyingly chunky. We have all been instructed to come prepared with warm and sensible clothing - too warm for the busy lobby. As a few the latecomers come rushing in to be kitted out, the audience has the anticipatory feel of a class waiting to set off for a school trip.*

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*A short walk together brings us to the recently refurbished concourse outside the ‘Paragon Interchange’ – Hull’s main train station and my arrival point each time I have visited the city. A*

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<sup>29</sup> Lane refers to an example document produced for the Slung Low performance ‘They only come out at night’. The script was written as a ‘diagetic’ graphic novel which was used to directly create the performance. This graphic novel was then referred to during the performance (as a prop) and also available as a document or ‘artefact’ that the audience could purchase.

<sup>30</sup> Lane, ‘Research Interview with Alan Lane, Artistic Director of Slung Low’.

*sandwich board indicates that our headphones should be put on, bringing the first sense of the soundtrack – ambient background music that immediately brings to mind the opening credits of a film or radio play. Moments later, the soundtrack is punctuated by a young women's voice. She is describing herself and telling us to look for her. Other people exit the station, seemingly oblivious to the 30 or so onlookers in headphones. Despite the fact I have seen the actress before there is a moment of genuine surprise when I realise the woman talking is approaching and less than ten metres away. She is talking to everyone and no one at the same time - an internal monologue that only we can hear. Wearing a distinctive red coat, the woman, whose name we learn is Sarah, is already crossing the road towards the city centre.*




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*Sarah's journey from the station to the Fruit Market is a whirlwind of memories, recalling past moments that led to the end of her relationship with William. As the audience follow along Paragon Street and into Victoria Square, supporting characters, props and scenery surprise us out of side-streets or pop up from behind street furniture, almost as a conjuror's trick. The city is being choreographed around the stories we are being told, and the streets feel charged with possibility - anything could happen around the next corner. The distortion of time and space in the narrative takes effect on the real city - despite knowing the geography of the place I lose track of how long we have been walking and where we have been.*



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*By the time the first act ends and the 'please remove your headphones' sign appears, disorientated audience members appear very much ready for refreshments and a chance to discuss what it is that they have just experienced. The word 'cinematic' crops up repeatedly, alongside discussion of the strange sensation of following the intimate details of a private conversation in the street. Others argue over whether or not they spotted the incidental character in the lobster outfit.*





*In the fading light, we are greeted by our guide to the second act. This greeting signals an immediate shift from voyeuristic onlooker to a new role within the performance. Fortunately for those of us fearful of audience participation, the Fruit Market is practically deserted and the role we have been given is little more than a group of people being guided around by the stories of an old man who wants to reflect on time, the city and his late brother. The jumbled scale of the warehouses, empty shops and passageways of the Fruit Market is a beguiling setting to for these stories, and the quietness gives it the feel of an abandoned film set. For the final monologue we meet the brother, who has returned as a ghost or a dream. The scene is set inside one of the warehouses, and requires us to huddle close together as we share a seat on one of the wooden pallets and listen intently. The scene is gripping, but the moment reawakens a reflexive self-awareness - I remind myself that I am sitting in a warehouse in Hull watching a scripted theatrical performance, and that everyone else is too.*




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*The taxi driver is curious to know what we are doing in this part of town on a Sunday evening. Four adults in a cab, each wearing headphones and strange necklaces, and two of them complete strangers before the start of the evening. We try to explain that it is theatre or, at least, 'kind-of' theatre. The taxi ride was another surprise - they have been arranged to whisk us from the warehouse in the Fruit Market back to the city centre, saving the legs of those who are not used to walking so far on what is a surprisingly cold May evening. Congregating in Queens Gardens under the tall BBC building the excited buzz returns. Whatever could be coming next?*






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*The original soundtrack starts up and by now I am aware that this is a signal for something to happen. It's unclear exactly what this will be, but the roof of an old building has been lit up, and a woman appears to be standing on top. The third story is split between past and present. George, a hospitable and charming angel, has returned to help Lucy (the women on the building) retrace the events leading up to her attempted suicide, while we travel back in time to hear the story of George's own story of lost love. We are back as onlookers again, although George addresses us from time to time to keep audience moving - first through the empty city centre and then onto a vintage bus. The momentum of what is a complex story is maintained during the journey with a live scene on board the bus and projections on buildings as we arrive back at the warehouse.*




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*The final narrative is played out in two parts - first in the warehouse, transformed into a masquerade ball from George's past, followed by the final journey on foot down to the docks. By this point it is*

*impossible to say how long I have been part of the performance - I am exhausted but at the same time don't want the experience to be over. The end of the journey is also the first proper sight of the water, which stretches out as a black expanse beyond the lights of the Victoria Pier. The final scene of George's friend Alice heading out to sea in a modern RNLI lifeboat brings me back to reality - seeing the dramatic ending underscores the volume of planning and technical effort that has gone the creation of this moment. As I step off the pier and hand my headphones back, my head is filled with competing thoughts, with an overriding sense that the city has been transformed.*



## 6.5 REFLECTION/ EVALUATION

### 6.5.1 Participant experience - data collection

Alongside first-hand observations, informal conversations with cast and crew and semi-structured research interviews with key members of the Slung Low team, a participant questionnaire was designed and circulated as a way of reaching out to the participant experience of the performance. This field-work was carried out during and after the preview night and for the first four nights of the public performance. Prior to each performance that was surveyed, I explained the research aims and questionnaire with all participants, distributed a short information document (Figure 6.12), and asked to take their contact details and informed consent to be part of the research. The process of gaining access to participants prior to the performance was only possible due the way that Slung Low a 'temporary lobby' (in this case, the foyer of Hull Truck Theatre) asking ticket holders to arrive half an hour before the start time in order to set up each individual with their audio equipment. By discussing the aims of my research individually during this setting-up time, I was able to gain a broad understanding of how people were anticipating the performance as well as increasing the likelihood of participants responding to the performance via the online questionnaire.



Figure 6.12. RECITE flyer providing information related to the research project. Flyer handed out to all audience members prior to the start of the performance.

The participant questionnaire generated a reasonable response rate (25%), with 30 detailed questionnaire responses from 120 participants over five nights of the performance.<sup>31</sup>

### 6.5.2 Analysis

Analysis of the performance has been carried out using the qualitative data collected from practitioner interviews, participant observation, participant feedback questionnaires, and first-hand

<sup>31</sup> I was unable to travel to Hull on one of the 5 nights of the performance to distribute the information sheet and collect participant contact details. Slung Low had originally agreed to do this in my place but had been unable to due to other time pressures on the night.

experience of the performance. The analysis process is described in detail in the methodology chapter (6).

The discussion section is structured around three broad themes, which have emerged from the analysis of the range of qualitative data collected from performance-makers and participants:

- scenography and framing
- sensory experience
- relationship to Hull

Before presenting this analysis, a fourth ‘theme’ is introduced - one that relates to the profile of respondents (based on some quantitative analysis of the questionnaire) and the wider context of the performance. The discussion section is rounded up with an examination of the relationship between the performance and the regeneration efforts in the Fruit Market.

### 6.5.3 Participant profile

One of the preliminary (closed) questions on the participant questionnaire asked respondents:

*‘How did you come to participate in the performance?’*

Possible responses were limited to the following options: *‘I am professionally involved (eg. reviewing)’*, *‘a friend of the cast or crew’*, *‘I saw it advertised at Hull Truck Theatre’*, *‘I saw the flyer’*, *‘word of mouth’*, or *‘other’*. A significant proportion (7 of 30) questionnaire respondents were linked to Slung Low as a friend or family member, with a further 4 of 30 describing themselves as professionally involved.

The subsequent (closed) question asked:

*‘Where have you travelled from to be involved in the performance (please enter first part of home postcode only, eg: HU1)?’.*

The results show that a large majority of respondents had travelled from outside Hull for the performance, including people from London, Cambridge, Leeds and Sheffield. Meanwhile, a much smaller proportion (5 of the 30 respondents) had travelled from a Hull postcode.

These numbers may reflect the fact that the preview night was included in the research (which was specifically for invited guests and reviewers), as well as the possibility that people with a link to the company might feel more inclined to respond to a research request. Nonetheless, anecdotal evidence from the company themselves appears to confirm the indications from the questionnaire –

that a substantial proportion of participants who took part in *Mapping the City* had a previous connection with Slung Low or were (in the words of Alan Lane) 'theatre people' who had travelled to Hull specifically for the performance.<sup>32</sup>

Looking beyond the potentially pejorative term 'theatre people', the exclusion of local participants was expressed as being a frustration to Slung Low. One explanation for this is the limited ticket availability (there were 150 tickets available for the 5 public nights at a cost of £10), leaving people not connected to the company in some way unable to 'get in on the act'. The fact that the performance was created at a significant cost and was only seen by around 150 people was also a contentious issue locally. Slung Low wanted the show to run for an extra week, but Lane suggests that it was the Council who feared that this would not sell, because this type of art would not be a draw for enough people from the city.<sup>33</sup> In the event, the show sold out all 150 tickets a week prior to the performances, and Lane argues that within the constraints of what was asked of the company (i.e. attract as many people as was possible over 5 nights), the performance could be judged a 'success'. However, in the research interviews the company repeatedly expressed a desire to breakdown the commonly held perceived divide between the high arts and popular culture, and to take their work to new audiences wherever possible.<sup>34</sup> Although the arguments put forward by Thackery suggested that the Council also oppose such a distinction between different forms of culture, the conflict over ticketing perhaps suggests otherwise.<sup>35</sup> This particular issue highlights the potential friction between the interests of different stakeholders when funding and promoting this form site-specific performance, particularly given the inherent constraints of the form in terms of participant numbers and other pressures on the performance-maker.

#### 6.5.4 Scenography and framing

This chapter has already drawn attention to some of the cinematic techniques and vocabulary that are significant within Slung Low's performances, made apparent in the lighting design, outdoor 'scenography', and the way the design mixes wide angle, long shots, and close-ups. Performance theorists have talked about the potential for site-specific performance to open up 'fresh eyes' and to see more than everyday reality.<sup>36</sup> This has been elaborated on by McAuley, who has suggested that this overlaying of the real and the fictional in site-specific work can have a profound impact on the participant's experience of the site, while at the same time allowing sufficient space for the

<sup>32</sup> Lane, 'Follow-up (analysis) Interview with Alan Lane, Artistic Director of Slung Low'.

<sup>33</sup> Nick Ahad, 'Moving Work That Theatre Company Hopes Will Catch on', *Yorkshire Post*, 4 June 2011 <<http://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/moving-work-that-theatre-company-hopes-will-catch-on-1-3341241>> [accessed 13 November 2013].

<sup>34</sup> Lane, 'Follow-up (analysis) Interview with Alan Lane, Artistic Director of Slung Low'.

<sup>35</sup> Thackery.

<sup>36</sup> Levin, p. 249.

participant to retain an awareness of the framing process (and their role within the frame).<sup>37</sup> Analysis of the qualitative responses to the performance indicates a very strong response to the way that the performance framed the everyday life of the city. This caused a bewilderment in the sense that “*I didn't know who was or wasn't a part of the show*”. It also delivered a cinematic quality to the city, with the environment and the people within it “*more wonderful and less mundane*”. Several respondents observed how the city became ‘reframed’ as more beautiful through the lens of the performance. Sites and interactions that might be considered banal or ‘everyday’ became fascinating and bewildering through cinematic framing and the blurring of fiction and reality, with everything in the city, both directed and accidental, viewed within the performance frame. These effects were deliberately played upon by using the same spaces in each of the three intertwined stories, jumping across time and memory, and occasionally addressing participants directly, as though they were a part of that fictional world. In amongst all the action, repeated signs and metaphors kept popping up in unexpected places to casually remind the viewer of past and future events in the narrative.

The number of people observing the performance in public spaces (but outside of the immediate frame of the scripted performance) is also worth considering. Slung Low have previously described this effect as ‘flash mob-y’, with passers-by seemingly entertained or confused by the unusual behaviour of a large group of people wearing headphones and following a couple on a mobile bar along a street on an otherwise ordinary evening in Hull. There are, however, potential social and ethical implications of framing the everyday as performance. Where onlookers might be entertained or simply baffled by this spectacle, the will of the performance-makers may force others into the frame (along with the rest of the city) for the benefit of those small number of people lucky enough to experience the performance. Lane agrees that this is an issue that has been discussed in relation to their site-specific practice. In previous performances (such as ‘Beyond the Frontline’) Lane describes how care has been taken to invite local people in during the production phase in order to begin to break down this sense of exclusion and build up an understanding within the local community. However, he argues that this was less of an issue with *Mapping the City*, which was ‘small enough, mobile enough, and took place at night when Hull was empty’, therefore minimizing the possibility that those not ‘in on the act’ were excluded or exploited.<sup>38</sup>

Slung Low’s ambitious original aim for the audiences of *Mapping the City* was that it would be an experience ‘so transformative and encompassing’ that ‘the world cannot possibly be the same because you have had this experience’.<sup>39</sup> While there is a limited amount of evidence in the

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<sup>37</sup> McAuley, ‘Site-Specific Performance’, p. 50.

<sup>38</sup> Lane, ‘Research Interview with Alan Lane, Artistic Director of Slung Low’.

<sup>39</sup> Lane, ‘Research Interview with Alan Lane, Artistic Director of Slung Low’.

participant questionnaire responses to show that the company had been successful in this aim, several respondents did describe the way that the city became 'magical' for the duration of the performance. Lane himself found it difficult to comment on whether a work was 'successful' in terms of its 'transformative' nature. It was suggested that this type of evaluation went against the idea of art, and was more relevant to the funders or other stakeholders such as the Council. He conceded that having such ambitious aims partly reflected the need to remain motivated during the draining process of performance-making, where it is easy to lose sight of the end if you do not aim for the best possible result. Lane reiterated the idea that the important thing for the company is that the performance *might* have made a lasting impact on the way in which people now think about (for example) the pier, or the Fruit Market and in that respect, part of the world couldn't possibly be the same again.

#### 6.5.5 Sensory experience

Along with the 'magical' sensation of framing the city as a stage, this particular form of site-specific performance is designed to bombard the senses - an immersion within the fiction via the audio feed at the same time as experiencing the 'real' sights, smells, and sounds of the city. This effect has been previously described by authors as a 'heightened awareness' of being-in-the-world, whereby the body becomes 'porous, open, and receptive'.<sup>40</sup> Slung Low's approach deliberately plays on this effect using the wireless headphone technology. This enables a range of dramaturgies or spatial relationships between the actors and the audience. In *Mapping the City* this included scenes indoors and outdoors, from locations such as the top deck of a moving bus to a nearby rooftop, whilst listening to the actors addressing you directly right up close to overhearing distant 'private' exchanges. Throughout all of these dramaturgical arrangements, an (artificially) intimate relationship between actors and audience was maintained via the audio. This structure also allows the introduction of soundtrack linking (or underneath) dialogue - a further example of the cinematic influence on the performance. The audience response to this performance design expressed a feeling of being 'voyeuristic' - listening to the 'private' conversations of the actors resulted in confusion. This was most clearly reported in relation to Act 1, perhaps due to the initial surprise of watching and hearing a story in the street, but also due to the subject matter - the everyday private exchanges of a couple falling out of love. The nature of the dislocated intimacy resulted in a 'weird feeling', whereby people felt both absorbed in the human relationship while physically distant.

The elements of surprise and emotion could be in part due to the novelty aspect of this form of theatre - the audience were perhaps not used to this type of performance, which was a step beyond

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<sup>40</sup> Hunter, 'Embodying the Site', p. 367.

the traditional arts output of a UK northern city. It challenged the audience's thinking spatially and emotionally, with the cold evening weather of early May often challenging their endurance. In the follow-up interview, Lane agreed that the novelty aspect (wearing headphones and following live actors across the city) probably has a lot to do with the initial appeal this form of performance. From experience, Slung Low know that a crowd will be entertained by certain events for a certain amount of time - the 'put your headphones on now' sign entertains a group for around 3 minutes (Lane doesn't know why), then the audience trying to work out who the actor is when they first hear a voice through their headphones will be another 5 minutes, and so on. This novelty factor is why Slung Low structured Act One to begin at a certain pace – to take advantage of this novelty value and introduce participants to the way a Slung Low performance works. However Lane's experience also suggests that if people came back to see a similarly-structured site-specific performance in the near future, they might not be so gripped by this novelty value but might pick up on some of the other levels of detail (such as the incidental appearance of characters or props linking the three stories), which may have been previously overlooked.

#### 6.5.6 Relationship to Hull

Research interviews have indicated that Slung Low arrived with 'mixed' preconceptions of Hull. This is also reflected in those of participants, many of whom who didn't know or hadn't visited the city. This view was characterised by questionnaire responses, which included statements such as *"I had heard mixed things about Hull so was expecting the worst but was pleasantly surprised"*. This mixed perception of the city was not limited to those visiting for the first time, with one response from a participant who lived in Hull also describing their relationship with the city as 'love/ hate'.

The City Council's aspiration of bringing Slung Low to Hull to create a site-specific performance piece was built around the idea that the performance might bring about a number of additional socio-economic benefits. These might be broadly described as raising the city's cultural profile, attracting in new visitors to see Hull 'at its best', and to spread positive messages about the city (perhaps to other potential other visitors or investors). While the purpose of this study is not to prove or disprove whether *Mapping the City* was a success in terms of the Council's fairly ambiguous aims, questionnaire responses to the perception of Hull *after* the performance were striking. Quite aside from the form and content of the performance itself, some of these negative or 'mixed' preconceptions of Hull appeared to be challenged as a result of the location of the performance, which compelled participants to travel to Hull and spend some the time in the city.

Secondly, responses indicate that the nature and scenography of the 'magic-real' performance and the choice of interesting or 'unusual' locations (the Fruit Market) were successful in framing the city



as both dramatic and exciting. Access in and around this unique area was commonly cited as one of the factors in challenging newcomers' preconceptions of Hull. "*I probably came with fairly negative opinions of Hull but the show made me go into spaces I would never have gone into and it also made me see the beautiful side of Hull*". Meanwhile, local participants also found their relationship the city changed through the experience of spending time around the Fruit Market and seeing it in a new light (or perhaps after dark). This finding might reiterate something that those very familiar with the Fruit Market already know, but it also suggests that the area has certain other qualities that lend it to both acting as a 'set' and immediately 'capturing the imagination' of people visiting for the first time.

For those who already knew the city, new meanings and associations generated by the narrative performance were layered over existing meanings and memories. Prior the event, Slung Low defined 'mapping' as these strong personal emotional connections with a place.<sup>41</sup> It was therefore interesting to note that the handful of respondents who lived or worked in Hull made greater reference to the use of such real 'places'. The most notable examples of this were the 'old Romeo and Juliet nightclub' (site of the dramatic rooftop fall) or the docks. These spaces carried other meanings, provoking a clash between old and new meanings that overlapped and confused each other. These local responses contrasted with those visiting for the first time, who could not relate the experience to prior associations in the same way. Although the number of local responses to the questionnaire was limited (and despite the potential exclusion of local people discussed previously), this discussion links back to the desire that Slung Low expressed for having local people involved in their performances – as performers, makers, participants, and spectators. In interviews before and after the Hull performances, Lane described how this layering of existing (and new) meanings with the memories of the performance is a key motivation for working in this way. He returned to the particular example of the actor falling off the roof of a building in *Mapping the City*, arguing that anyone who had seen the performance couldn't help but look up that building and contemplate that moment the next time they walked past it. Lane also expressed regret that relatively few local people had had the opportunity to experience the impact (or affect) of the performance in this way.

#### **6.5.7 *Mapping the City*: Site-specificity and regeneration**

As touched upon in the previous section, the relationship between *Mapping the City* and the wider programme of economic and physical regeneration of the Fruit Market Hull was highlighted in the research interview with Hull City Council. Although the commission of Slung Low represents a very small part of the overall cultural activity (in this area and the city), the way in which *Mapping the City*

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<sup>41</sup> Research Interview with Alan Lane, Slung Low Artistic Director, April 2011.

directly engaged its audience within the urban fabric of the Fruit Market has potentially important implications for the role of site-specific practice in ‘reimagining’ the future of sites of (stalled) urban regeneration. Despite this, Slung Low (and Lane in particular) remain deeply sceptical of any attempt to make a direct connection between the work of site-specific performance-makers and an urban regeneration agenda:

*“Art is not or should not be a regeneration tool. Art that aims to do this will either be a bad attempt at art, or a bad attempt at regeneration. Art or performance might ‘imagine’ the conditions for regeneration, but you could do this type of performance every night of the week and it would not impact on the aim to transform the Fruit Market into a European style cafe-bar destination”*<sup>42</sup>

Lane went on to advocate a bottom-up approach to urban regeneration, one catalysed by the action of local individuals and groups (as opposed to the City Council suggesting that they want more café – bars). Lane used the example of the Slung Low headquarters in Holbeck (the HUB) and the long-term efforts of the company to ‘regenerate’ derelict spaces and open up new performance spaces to support the cultural activity of the neighbourhood.<sup>43</sup>

While this discussion may appear to digress from the specifics of Hull performance towards a more general discussion of the role of creative practitioners in developing studio and performance spaces, it raises some potentially important issues about how performance-makers such as Slung Low might perceive the purpose of different forms of artistic practice. As Lane suggested in interviews, the main motivation behind *Mapping the City* was to entertain and move its audience (literally and emotionally) via the power of storytelling -using Hull and the Fruit Market as a cinematic backdrop to the action. In this sense the site-specificity of the performance (in terms of being embedded in the history or politics of the site) was less of a priority. This critical reading of the relationship between site and performance in *Mapping the City* is supported by the fact that each of the three stories only made fleeting reference to the particular social history of the Fruit Market and its role within the city. This was reinforced in some of the audience responses to the question:

*‘Did the performance(s) affect the way in which you looked at the city? If so, can you describe this?’*

Feedback from a number of different respondents expressed the idea that the performance felt somewhat generic and could have been applied to any city. Lane admitted that there is some truth that the narrative was ‘generic’. It was designed to work for Hull with specific references (such as the

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<sup>42</sup> Lane, ‘Follow-up (analysis) Interview with Alan Lane, Artistic Director of Slung Low’.

<sup>43</sup> Lane, ‘Follow-up (analysis) Interview with Alan Lane, Artistic Director of Slung Low’.

significance of the Humber and it being the place where people commit suicide). However the fact that Slung Low believe the performance could be adapted for other places in future is indicative of the fact that it is, to some extent, 'site-generic'.<sup>44</sup>

Returning to the relationship between performance practice and urban regeneration, it must be remembered that Lane's stance on this issue far from apathetic - as demonstrated by the years of local-scale regeneration efforts at Holbeck. In Hull, however, a view appears to have been taken that a commission of this type and a limited one-month residency in a new city is not the right time to try and unpick the contested history and fabric of the site or to raise critical questions around its future development. The lack of engagement with the contested history of the site might also be linked back to the three writers selected for *Mapping the City*. One might draw a connection between the decision to build the narratives around the more universal themes of love and loss and their lack of a strong local relationship to the site prior to the performance. Returning to the research questions put forward by the introduction of thesis, it could be argued that this performance is therefore a missed opportunity to open up a meaningful critical dialogue around the identity of the Fruit Market and, in particular, the political and economic decisions that have underpinned the failure of urban regeneration efforts to breathe new life into this part of the city. However, questions might also be raised around the fact that the unique character of the Fruit Market – as expressed by people who participated in *Mapping the City* – may be eroded in the rush to introduce new commercial and residential development. Despite the pressures of funding and production, site-specific performance-makers find themselves in a privileged position to engage and affect participants, opening up 'fresh eyes' on a place. Given this opportunity, a truly 'site-specific' work might be one that (directly or indirectly) addresses the contested site histories, articulates awkward political questions, and even offers alternative futures.

## 6.6 Postscript (aftermath)

*In the years following the 2011 Mapping the City case study, there have been a number of significant developments, both in terms of the regeneration of the Fruit Market and in the wider cultural development of the city. A number of new venues have opened within the former wholesaler warehouses on Humber Street. Perhaps most notable of these is 'Fruit Space', which acts as a base for the Hull-based professional theatre company Ensemble 52 as well as hosting a range of cultural activities. Describing itself as 'warehouse venue', Fruit Space curates a programme of theatre, live music, cinema, exhibitions, indoor markets, and activities for young people.<sup>45</sup> Opposite, the new*

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<sup>44</sup> Lane, 'Follow-up (analysis) Interview with Alan Lane, Artistic Director of Slung Low'.

<sup>45</sup> 'Fruit Space' <<http://www.fruitspace.co.uk/info/>> [accessed 6 January 2014].

*'Museum of Club Culture' presents a 'unique' collection archive material from night clubs around the world. The emergence of these types of venues formed a key part of Hull's bid to become UK City of Culture 2017. The bid, which placed a strong emphasis on grass-roots culture and the Fruit Market as gentrified/ cultural hive, also included a reference to future work with regional performance-makers including Slung Low. The 'Hull Yes!' 2017 bid was announced as successful in November 2013.*

*Describing the reasons behind its success, the City of Culture judges made particular reference to the wide-ranging proposed programme, evidence of engagement across the city at a grassroots level, the significance of culture within the city's plan, and the 'interesting' use of architecture and urban spaces.<sup>46</sup> Just a few weeks after the City of Culture announcement, new proposals for the residential and commercial redevelopment of the Fruit Market were revealed.<sup>47</sup>*

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<sup>46</sup> Danny Longhorn, 'Judges Reveal Why Hull Won UK City of Culture 2017 Title ahead of Leicester, Swansea and Dundee', *Hull Daily Mail*, 30 December 2013 <<http://www.hulldailymail.co.uk/Judges-reveal-Hull-won-UK-City-Culture-2017-title/story-20379209-detail/story.html>> [accessed 6 January 2014].

<sup>47</sup> Angus Young, 'Revealed: Hull Fruit Market Masterplan Featuring New Homes, Gallery and Retail Units', *Hull Daily Mail*, 10 December 2013 <<http://www.hulldailymail.co.uk/Revealed-Hull-Fruit-Market-masterplan-featuring/story-20299520-detail/story.html>> [accessed 6 January 2014].

## 7 The Anfield Home Tour: Guiding, revealing, and telling stories in Anfield, Liverpool

***The Anfield Home Tour (2012).*** Original concept by Jeanne van Heeswijk. Written and co-devised by Britt Jurgensen, Debbie Morgan and Graham Hicks, with original text and inspiration from residents of Anfield and Everton.

*"A heritage tour with guide Carl Ainsworth. Discover places of interest and local landmarks in the Anfield neighbourhood. The tour will explore the past and present of housing politics and the impact that regeneration has had on the local community. End the tour at Mitchell's Bakery and share coffee and cake with some of the local people involved in 2Up 2Down."*<sup>1</sup>



Figure 7.1. *The Anfield Home Tour* invite gave little away. Image: Author.

### 7.0 Introduction

The second case-study performance is sited in Anfield, a residential district of Liverpool that is known around the world for its association with the home stadium of Liverpool Football Club. The 'Anfield Home Tour' was a site-specific performance created out of a larger project by artist Jeanne van Heeswijk for Liverpool Biennial 2012. Van Heeswijk, who has established a reputation for her participatory arts practice in cities across Europe and beyond, used her commission for the 2012 Biennial to develop a long-term community engagement project in Anfield. The project responded to the widespread demolition and reconstruction of the area under the 'Pathfinder' Housing Market

<sup>1</sup> 2up 2down / Homebaked, 'Introduction to the Anfield Home Tour', 2012  
<<http://www.2up2down.org.uk/events/future-event/>> [accessed 18 July 2013].

Renewal (HMR) urban regeneration programme. Working with a group of young people in the area, van Heeswijk developed a project to reimagine of a block of empty properties ('2Up 2 Down'). This initial engagement spawned further projects with other groups of residents, including the re-opening of a local community hub and working bakery, known as 'HomeBaked', and a site-specific performance tour to tell the resident's story of the housing regeneration - '*The Anfield Home Tour*'. Although initiated by the artist, these projects were developed, created and performed in collaboration with local performance-makers, volunteers, and residents.

*The Anfield Home Tour* was performed over a series of ten weekends during the Liverpool Biennial Festival, from September to November 2012. On each Saturday during the Biennial, a group of around 20 people (all of whom had pre-booked tickets via the Biennial) congregated at the Cunard Building, known more widely as one of Liverpool's 'Three Graces'. The group were transported by minibus out to Anfield, with tour guide Carl Ainsworth introducing the sights and stories of the city and the area. Winding around the derelict 'tinned-up' streets, the minibus visited a number of long-time Anfield residents who have lived, or still live, in amongst the demolition and redevelopment.<sup>2</sup> These visits were interspersed with Carl's stories, jokes and a sing-song before the group reached the final destination of the tour - the bakery at the centre of the 2Up 2 Down / Homebaked project. Here participants had the opportunity to meet and talk to a number of local people involved in the creation of the tour.

### **7.0.1 Case Study identification and access**

Following the Hull Fruit Market case study, it was significant that the second case study performance also addressed the emerging theme of urban regeneration policy and so-called 'market failure'. However the urban context, approach, methods, and politics of the performance-makers are markedly different to those observed and documented in the Slung Low case study, highlighting the breadth of practice that can be described by the label of 'site-specific performance'. The identification of *the Anfield Home Tour* performance as a potential research case was initiated through a RECITE contact at URBED, an urban design practice specialising in regeneration and community-orientated design. URBED had been brought in as a consultant to assist with the 2Up 2 Down design project. However, with the identification of this project as a potential case study only happening around the start of the Biennial, a certain adaptation of the methodology developed for the first case study was required. The need to modify the research design to fit the situation on the ground (whilst retaining a critical, reflexive sensibility) was touched in the methodology chapter and

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<sup>2</sup> 'Tinned up' is a term used locally to describe the metal panels used to secure empty and derelict houses.

has been particularly important in the context of researching time-limited and live performance events.

In October 2012, I was able to join *the Anfield Home Tour* as a participant for the live performance. Following this first-hand observation and documentation, I returned to Liverpool to interview some of the writers, makers, and performers of the piece, as well as carrying out additional research into the wider context of Housing Market Renewal and the regeneration of Anfield.

### 7.0.2 Purpose of case study

The purposes of *the Anfield Home Tour* as a research case study can be summarised as follows:

- the siting of this performance as a response to the stalled Housing Market Renewal (HMR) programme was a further opportunity to develop the role of performance as a critical tool in the context of urban regeneration
- the structure or dramaturgy of this performance is an example of the guiding and storytelling model introduced in the taxonomy of site-specific practice, enabling me to draw out the issues unique to this form of participatory practice
- the case study explores the network of relationships between the commissioning institution (Liverpool Biennial), other stakeholders in the regeneration of the area (Liverpool City Council and the local housing association), the artist, and the local community as co-creators of the performance

Over the course of researching this project as a case study, it also became apparent how difficult it is to discuss *the Anfield Home Tour* performance in isolation from the broader context of the project. As both Bishop and van Heeswijk have suggested, this form of participatory practice is about the creation of situations - projects that are long-term, involve many co-producers, and often lack a clear endpoint.<sup>3</sup> The Anfield 'situation' was set up in response to the HMR regeneration programme, and sought to activate a number of different projects in order to develop an alternative, community-led model of development in Anfield.<sup>4</sup> This process began before *the Anfield Home Tour* performance was conceived and has continued to be developed long after the Biennial had finished.<sup>5</sup> *The Anfield Home Tour* performance therefore represents the 'situation' at one particular point in time, where an external public audience was invited in to engage with a complex and ongoing process.

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<sup>3</sup> Bishop, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> PhD Research interview with Britt Jurgensen, Anfield Home Tour Director, 2013.

<sup>5</sup> See postscript at the end of this chapter.

Nonetheless, for the purposes of this case study (and the thesis) it is also important to keep the focus on the particular site-specific performance practice that was developed as a way of representing that process and bringing together local storytellers and participants together on site.

## 7.1 SITE

### 7.1.1 Liverpool

In his guide to the 'New Ruins' of Great Britain, Owen Hatherley describes the urban centre of Liverpool as 'the most wholly and thrillingly urban environment in England outside of London'.<sup>6</sup> While not everyone will concur with Hatherley's reading of the bold architectural experiments of the late-nineteenth and twentieth century, this description conjures up an image of a city that has been shaped by industrial wealth and a strong municipal authority. Liverpool is also unusual in that the richness of architecture is not confined to one historic period of construction, illustrated by its two competing cathedrals, the drama of the Mersey and the 'Three Graces' alongside the contemporary 'Museum of Liverpool', the refurbished Albert Docks, and recent attempts to knit together the docks and the rest of the centre with the vast investment in the retail-led development that is Liverpool One. As well as the boldness and grandeur of the city's civic architecture, the narrative of Liverpool is inseparable from the city's political history, and it is important to remember that you are also at the heart of the most deprived local authority in the UK.<sup>7</sup>

In his research into housing and public policy Brendan Nevin highlights how, as a city with such a contested past, any reading of contemporary policy-making in Liverpool must be grounded within an understanding of its recent social and political history. The narrative of 20<sup>th</sup> century urban development and housing policy in Liverpool is entangled in the politics of the City Council. Whether it is the experimentation with 'municipal socialism' or the 1980s Militant council and the clashes with Labour leader Neil Kinnock, Liverpool City Council has been held up by many as a byword for failure and chaos.<sup>8</sup> Whether this is a fair judgement beyond the scope of this thesis, but the broader picture throughout the latter part of twentieth century is one of a struggle to restructure a fragile regional economy. Following the Depression of the 1930s and the Second World War, the port of Liverpool went into steady decline, which resulted in an endemic loss of population. Half the population of the city (400,000 residents) left between 1931 and 2001.<sup>9</sup> The decades of population

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<sup>6</sup> Hatherley, p. 331.

<sup>7</sup> Liverpool City Council, *The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010: A Liverpool Analysis (Executive Summary)* (Liverpool: Liverpool City Council, 2010) <<http://liverpool.gov.uk/media/129428/Executive-Summary-2010.pdf>> [accessed 23 November 2013].

<sup>8</sup> Hatherley, pp. 334–335.

<sup>9</sup> Brendan Nevin, 'Housing Market Renewal in Liverpool: Locating the Gentrification Debate in History, Context and Evidence', *Housing studies*, 25 (2010), 715–33 (p. 718).



loss has had a dramatic impact on the balance of population densities in the city, with knock-on impacts on levels of employment, local incomes, and the loss of shops, pubs and community facilities. By the 1990s, the level of vacant housing in certain neighbourhoods stood at 30% or more.<sup>10</sup> Derelict or vacant commercial and community buildings now sit alongside a substantial stock of empty housing. As Nevin suggests, the “cumulative impact of this downward spiral in population and local expenditure has been to threaten the existence of many low-income neighbourhoods in the inner city”.<sup>11</sup> These neighbourhoods include Wavertree, Edge Hill, Picton, and Anfield.

In contrast to the depopulated neighbourhoods that border the centre, Liverpool city centre has undergone a something of a resurgence in recent years. Much of this is owed to what Amin and others describe as the neo-liberal vision of consumption-led regeneration - attracting people back to the city centre to work, live, visit, and spend.<sup>12</sup> While this might be most visible in terms of Liverpool One and the transformation of the city centre into a regional retail destination, the cultural renaissance has also played an important part in attracting increased national (and international) attention. A significant part of this cultural revival can be linked back to Liverpool’s year as European Capital of Culture in 2008, as well as the ongoing Liverpool Biennial (international festival of contemporary art), which is the key departure point for this case study.

### 7.1.2 Housing Market Renewal

The debate around the processes and implementation of the urban regeneration policy known as Housing Market Renewal (HMR) are ongoing and have been covered extensively in recent literature regeneration and urban policy. Some of the political context behind this policy was introduced in the section on New Labour reform in chapter 4. While this case study chapter (and this thesis) will not attempt to undertake a comprehensive discussion of housing policy and its many impacts, the issues and controversies caused by HMR are important to understanding the recent context of the Anfield site. Moreover, the performance itself was principally a response to those social, economic, and environmental conditions created by HMR. This section will attempt to briefly summarise the history of the policy will be undertaken, before introducing some of the key arguments and criticisms that relate to the wider HMR programme.

In the late 1990s, academics and policy-makers raised concerns around the ‘abandonment’ of certain urban areas in the West Midlands and northern England.<sup>13</sup> Following a study by the Centre

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<sup>10</sup> Nevin, p. 715.

<sup>11</sup> Nevin, p. 718.

<sup>12</sup> Amin, *Cities for the Many Not the Few*, pp. 6–7.

<sup>13</sup> Paul Keenan, Stuart Lowe and Sheila Spencer, ‘Housing Abandonment in Inner Cities-the Politics of Low Demand for Housing’, *Housing Studies*, 14 (1999), 703–16; David Webb, ‘Rethinking the Role of Markets in

for Urban and Regional Studies at the University of Birmingham, Housing Market Renewal (HMR) was conceived as a mechanism of urban regeneration initiated to address the ‘serious market failures’ that underpinned levels of low demand and abandonment. Launched in 2003, HMR was the largest publicly funded housing renewal programme in the UK. According to the ODPM report, the HMR initiative was conceived with the twin aims of transforming some of the most deprived urban areas in England and establishing “a healthy housing market with balanced supply and demand”.<sup>14</sup> The implementation of HMR was based on a 15-year plan to either refurbish or demolish and rebuild the existing housing stock in a number of so-called ‘Pathfinder’ areas in towns and cities in northern England. These areas were identified as those that suffered from serious post-industrial decline, high rates of unemployment and ‘persistent market failure’ in land and housing markets.<sup>15</sup> Unlike the more prosperous parts of the country (particularly London and the south-east) that had seen an unprecedented increase in housing prices during this period, the Pathfinder areas (in cities such as Liverpool) were still suffering economic depression. This depression was characterised by a lack of inward investment in the housing stock, abandonment of houses and commercial buildings, low densities or low demand, and a stagnant housing market.

HMR has attracted considerable controversy, with criticism from academics, community groups, heritage organisations, and others. Several authors have noted a steady shift in the economic and social goals that originally underpinned the scheme.<sup>16</sup> Authors such as Stuart Cameron have argued that what emerged originally as a New Labour concern with social exclusion, low demand, and abandonment grew into a wider agenda of modernisation, one that sought to restructure the tenure and demographics of ‘failing’ inner city areas such as Anfield.<sup>17</sup> Ferrari and Lee go on to suggest that this restructuring of low demand neighbourhoods was part of a shift towards an economic competitiveness agenda, as a competitive regional economy was seen as requiring ‘aspirational groups’ to fuel demand and housing growth.<sup>18</sup> Allen argues that the justification of HMR policy is based on a deep-rooted middle class view of housing as property or an investment. This consumer model of housing is contrasted to the traditional working class values of the communities affected by the policy, who, Allen suggests, tend to place much greater value on housing more as a place to

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Urban Renewal: The Housing Market Renewal Initiative in England’, *Housing, Theory and Society*, 27 (2010), 313–31 (p. 313).

<sup>14</sup> ODPM, p. 29.

<sup>15</sup> Audit Commission, ‘HMR Strategic Review 2010: NewHeartlands, Merseyside’ (Audit Commission, 2011), p. 7 <<http://archive.audit-commission.gov.uk/auditcommission/SiteCollectionDocuments/Downloads/201103HMRnewheartlandsmerseyside.pdf>> [accessed 18 July 2013].

<sup>16</sup> Cameron; Ed Ferrari and Peter Lee, *Building Sustainable Housing Markets: Lessons from a Decade of Changing Demand and Housing Market Renewal* (Coventry: Chartered Institute of Housing, 2010).

<sup>17</sup> Cameron.

<sup>18</sup> Ferrari and Lee.

live. Allen goes on to argue that Pathfinder operates as a mechanism to relocate less mobile working class populations out through Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs), and can therefore be viewed as a further example of middle class and institutional dominance.<sup>19</sup> Hatherley goes further, likening certain Pathfinder programmes to class cleansing.<sup>20</sup> These arguments, which are often charged with philosophical and political convictions, seek to challenge the central ideology of HMR, particularly the overarching narrative that it was a policy enacted by a 'generous' government building new homes for the socially excluded urban poor.



Figure 7.2. In many of the streets in Anfield, 'tinned up' or derelict terraced houses now sit in amongst privately owner-occupied or rented homes. Image: author.

Other studies have scrutinised the research that underpinned the decision-making process around HMR. Townshend's study of the North East region was particularly critical of the methodology employed to develop the evidence base for the policy, noting a complete absence of qualitative research relating to how people valued existing homes or neighbourhoods that were due for demolition and rebuild.<sup>21</sup> Webb's analysis admits that the economic and statistical arguments may

<sup>19</sup> Chris Allen, *Housing Market Renewal and Social Class* (Abingdon, Oxon.: Routledge, 2008) <<http://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=gK8pvA2RuFMC&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=Housing+market+renewal+and+social+class&ots=zVEkOOpGhT&sig=vWC8cJ8jHSyEP9SsDvyTrnKILeM>> [accessed 18 November 2013].

<sup>20</sup> Hatherley, pp. xvi – xviii.

<sup>21</sup> Tim Townshend, 'From Inner City to Inner Suburb? Addressing Housing Aspirations in Low Demand Areas in NewcastleGateshead, UK', *Housing Studies*, 21 (2006), 501–21.

have been effective in terms of securing money for deprived parts of the north of England. Nonetheless, the ‘absolutist’ position taken up by the supporters of HMR have resulted in an inability to accept other narratives, thus failing to address the multiple and contested knowledge claims relating to what is considered of value in the process of regeneration.<sup>22</sup> Progress and successes have been generally reported in terms of new houses and refurbishments at the expense of other outcomes.<sup>23</sup>

*“In the case of the HMR, these conclusive decisions are made in a politically-charged environment and from a point of view which conceptualizes housing through the existence of sub-regional markets. To a significant extent, this environment determines the nature of the dominating narratives which emerge from their research.”<sup>24</sup>*

Within this centralised politically and economically-driven agenda, the notion of democratic space for local citizens to influence a debate on the future of their city has all but disappeared. Several critics have illustrated this lack of citizen engagement in the process by contrasting the top-down or centralised model of HMR with other community-led regeneration programmes. Both Webb and Cameron identified a possible conflict between other New Labour programmes such as the New Deal for Communities (which essentially viewed neighbourhoods as having potential to recover) and the top-down sub-regional strategy of HMR (which essentially viewed certain neighbourhoods as ‘unsalvageable’).<sup>25</sup> A recent review of HMR by Couch and Cocks concluded: ‘If the objective is to reduce deprivation and increase investment in these neighbourhoods, the best way forward would seem to be some form of continuation of the community-led and holistic NDC-style approach’.<sup>26</sup> Much of the research literature reviewed appears to support this view, suggesting that the key lesson to be learned from the HMR programme is the need for a community-led agenda, with greater levels of engagement and dialogue with local people.

### 7.1.3 Anfield

The predominantly residential area of Anfield is defined by its terraced housing, fronting on to narrow streets and backing onto alleyways, which are known locally as ‘enogs’ or ‘jiggers’. The predominantly two-storey scale of the housing is dwarfed by the imposing Anfield Stadium, and the nearby green expanse of Stanley Park. The survival of a large number of Victorian terraced streets marks a distinctive border between Anfield the neighbouring districts. In nearby parts of the city

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<sup>22</sup> Webb, p. 328.

<sup>23</sup> Webb.

<sup>24</sup> Webb, p. 316.

<sup>25</sup> Cameron; Webb.

<sup>26</sup> Chris Couch and Matthew Cocks, ‘Housing Renewal in England: Where Do We Go from Here?’, *Journal of Urban Regeneration and Renewal*, 6 (2012), 21–37 (p. 36).

such as Everton the same terraces have been cleared in the 1960s and 70s to make way for new models of social housing in high-rise developments, or in the 1980s and 90s to build semi-detached houses and bungalows in suburban-type cul-de-sacs.

In 2003 Housing Market Renewal began in the 'NewHeartlands', the name given to Liverpool, Sefton and the Wirral Pathfinder Area. Within Liverpool, four 'zones of opportunity' were identified in inner city areas immediately surrounding the city centre. One of the four areas identified was the 'Stanley Park Zone of Opportunity' which includes the 'Anfield and Breckfield Renewal Area'.<sup>27</sup> The creation and application of these pseudo-geographic (and often meaninglessly optimistic) descriptors appears to tie in with Webb's notion of a partial, yet dominant, knowledge claim on the part of administrators and politicians. It also seems to somehow disguise the extent of the real places and streets that were scheduled for demolition and reconstruction in Anfield, which are mapped in Figure 7.3.

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<sup>27</sup> Liverpool City Council, 'Your Guide to Housing Market Renewal within Anfield / Breckfield', 2008, p. 4.





Figure 7.3. Anfield and Breckfield 'regeneration zone'. Composite map / collage reproduced from information provided by Arena Housing Association. Image: author.

The Anfield and Breckfield Renewal Area was the site of the most planned clearances within the NewHeartlands Pathfinder area, with proposals to acquire and demolish approximately 1,800 residential and commercial properties.<sup>28</sup> An updated information document produced in 2008 by Liverpool City Council in association with Keepmoat PLC ('lead developer' for NewHeartlands), Arena (local housing association), and English Partnerships (the national regeneration agency for England) described the reasoning behind the widespread demolition in Anfield:

*"A lot of these properties have been vacant for years, as the demand for terraced properties has fallen, due to families preferring homes with gardens and off street parking. By reducing the amount of terraced properties this will ensure there is demand for the ones that are retained and enable new properties with gardens and parking spaces to be built on the sites where properties have been demolished."*<sup>29</sup>

As the demolition of large swathes of unfit housing was completed, lead developer Keepmoat PLC received funding via NewHeartlands to redevelop the cleared land with new-build housing. At the time of *the Anfield Home Tour* performances in 2012 only a relatively small proportion of these had been completed. The new housing deviates from the distinctive urban grain of the area, applying layouts that eschew the traditional street frontage in favour of houses set back from the street using cul-de-sacs and mews-court layouts. These street patterns, which are much closer to suburban models than the urban terrace, offer much lower densities but enable developers to offer sought-after off-street parking areas and larger private gardens. These features, along with the higher energy standards and double-glazed UPVC windows, have reportedly proved very popular with residents and newcomers who have been able to afford the new housing.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Liverpool City Council, 'Your Guide to Housing Market Renewal within Anfield / Breckfield', pp. 7–10.

<sup>29</sup> Liverpool City Council, 'Your Guide to Housing Market Renewal within Anfield / Breckfield', p. 4.

<sup>30</sup> Keepmoat, 'Anfield Renewal Scheme Is Shortlisted for Britain's Best Regeneration Project', 2013 <<http://www.keepmoat.com/news/anfield-renewal-scheme-shortlisted-britain%E2%80%99s-best-regeneration-project>> [accessed 19 November 2013].



Figure 7.4. New-build housing by Keepmoat (left) alongside a demolition site (phase 3 in Figure 7.3) and a row of existing Anfield terraces (right) that sit just outside the Regeneration Zone boundary. Image: author.

Architectural commentators and conservation groups have been far less enthusiastic about the housing constructed by Keepmoat and other commercial developers within the Pathfinder programme. Some have argued that the rush to demolish terraced housing has overlooked the possibilities for creative reuse, remodelling, and refurbishment. It is perhaps telling that some more inventive design proposals (to convert and remodel existing terraces into a number of different housetypes) have only subsequently emerged through Arena Housing after the collapse of HMR. Broader concerns have also been raised by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) in relation to the design quality of Keepmoat / NewHeartlands housing in other districts of Liverpool.<sup>31</sup> A report for Save Britain's Heritage expressed a strong sense of frustration at the extent of demolition of Victorian terraced housing.<sup>32</sup> In 2008, Members of Parliament also raised concerns about the threat to local heritage from Pathfinder schemes, suggesting that demolition was being actively encouraged by existing VAT rules (zero-rated on new-build but 20% on

<sup>31</sup> Richard Waite, 'CABE Still Critical of Pathfinder Scheme despite Latest Revisions', *Architect's Journal*, 2010 <<http://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/daily-news/-cabe-still-critical-of-pathfinder-scheme-despite-latest-revisions/5213863.article>> [accessed 19 November 2013].

<sup>32</sup> Couch and Cocks, p. 25.



refurbishment).<sup>33</sup> Looking beyond the preferences for conservation of traditional housing or new-build for new-build's sake, Hatherley argues that the Pathfinder programme says far more about the economics of regeneration than the 'quality' of the existing housing stock. A key justification for the HMR model was the diversification of the types of housing available in order to kick-start of the housing market. Hatherley counters this argument by suggesting that the same rows of Victorian terraces that have been tinned up and earmarked for demolition in Liverpool would have been bought up and improved or extended by speculators and aspirational homeowners in London or the south-east.<sup>34</sup>

Alongside the potential distress of forcing local communities to leave their homes and neighbourhoods that are due for demolition, another issue raised by the redevelopment programme has been the creation of an 'affordability gap'. This term describes the situation where the valuation of the terraced houses that are subject to Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) and demolition falls short of the cost of the replacement new-build houses. The government Public Accounts Committee raised this issue as having the potential to erode existing communities and price local people out of an area.<sup>35</sup> This was seen as being addressed in Anfield by offering a loan scheme to those displaced by CPOs so that they could buy one of the new-build houses nearby. While house prices were generally continuing to rise this model was seen as relatively low-risk to all parties involved. However, as we now know, much of this growth in the UK housing market was built upon unprecedented personal borrowing and debt. When credit bubble burst in 2007 this model became much less sustainable, and the economic downturn that followed had a significant impact on the progress of HMR in Anfield and beyond. As the Audit Commission's 2011 report into New Heartlands states:

*"By March 2011 it (NewHeartlands) will have acquired over 5,000 properties, demolished nearly 4,500 and provided external improvements to 20,000 homes. It has worked well with developers to provide over 2,800 new properties, although this is less than planned, largely because of the market downturn."*<sup>36</sup>

In 2010 the Audit Commission reported NewHeartlands to be 'effective' in achieving its objectives, particularly reporting on the 'success' of the programme in maintaining momentum during the early

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<sup>33</sup> Public Accounts Committee, *Housing Market Renewal: Pathfinders* (London: House of Commons, 2008) <<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmpubacc/106/106.pdf>> [accessed 23 November 2013].

<sup>34</sup> Hatherley, pp. xvi – xviii.

<sup>35</sup> Public Accounts Committee, pp. 5–6.

<sup>36</sup> Audit Commission, p. 7.

budget cuts after the economic crisis in 2007.<sup>37</sup> Despite this, Couch and Cocks note that by 2011 the programme had virtually stopped in its tracks.<sup>38</sup> The coalition government announced the immediate end of HMR with a dramatic announcement in 2011:

*“The former HMR programme imposed schemes to create large scale targets for demolition clearance and new build. That approach has not worked, often resulting in blighted areas where large scale demolition and clearance projects have been stopped in their tracks.”<sup>39</sup>*

Transition funding has been made available to re-house households ‘isolated in stalled schemes’, and provide a “structured exit from the former HMR programme either with a transition scheme or replaced by a locally-funded regeneration scheme”.<sup>40</sup> For Liverpool (and Anfield) this has translated into a strategy of acquiring of remaining affected properties, followed by demolition, site preparation and then development of the sites by the lead developer (Keepmoat) and the registered social landlord (Arena).<sup>41</sup> Although demolition and construction was still visible in the site in 2012, large areas housing remain vacant (or ‘tinned up’) with apparently little prospect of imminent redevelopment. Other streets have been demolished, cleared and fenced off, but face an uncertain future until further public investment becomes available. In the context of further local authority cuts, there is growing uncertainty that the renewal and rebuilding of the area will be completed, leaving many people living directly alongside abandoned homes and vacant land for many years. These negative impacts of the demolition and stalled HMR programme have been strongly felt by the neighbourhood of Anfield and beyond. Recent research by Lee Crookes has documented the range of ‘unsettling, damaging, sometimes fatal’ effects of displacement resulting from HMR policy.<sup>42</sup> It is within this context of uncertainty, disillusionment, and anger that the Anfield ‘2 Up 2 Down’ and ‘Homebaked’ projects began to take shape.

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<sup>37</sup> Audit Commission, p. 18.

<sup>38</sup> Couch and Cocks, p. 26.

<sup>39</sup> DCLG (2011) in Couch and Cocks, p. 26 (original Government online source no longer available).

<sup>40</sup> Homes and Communities Agency, ‘Housing Market Renewal Transition’, 2011 <<http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/ourwork/housing-market-renewal-transition>> [accessed 19 November 2013].

<sup>41</sup> Couch and Cocks, p. 26.

<sup>42</sup> Lee Crookes, ‘The Making of Space and the Losing of Place: A Critical Geography of Gentrification-by-Bulldozer in the North of England’ (unpublished PhD, University of Sheffield, 2012), p. 306.

## 7.2 CONCEPTION

### 7.2.1 Artistic convictions

Jeanne van Heeswijk describes her practice as a way of 'learning together on sites and exploring what it takes to be an active citizen'.<sup>43</sup> What constitutes a 'site' varies across van Heeswijk's diverse practice. There is also an explicit focus on urban areas that are undergoing (or have undergone) some form of rapid transition, and her work might also be described using Kwon's notion of the 'expansion' of site-specificity - engaging with socio-political issues and developing collaborations with local individuals and groups.<sup>44</sup> Van Heeswijk places huge importance on collaboration with 'experts of location', a phrase she uses to move beyond the ubiquitously (and uncritically) applied term 'community'. Although most likely to be a resident, worker, or local business-owner, an 'expert of location' might also be a tourist, student, or visitor - broadening the scope of participation by asking about the types of knowledge that might be relevant to the issues faced in an area.<sup>45</sup> Identifying those experts of location and drawing them together to form a project 'team' is a central to this form of practice and is an ongoing activity throughout each project. Van Heeswijk also places storytelling as central to her way of working, putting it forward as a way of mediating the first encounters with people within a location or place, building up trust, and establishing common ground. The sharing and telling of stories typically takes place within the open structure of her 'public faculties'. These events involve van Heeswijk personally occupying a public site for four days, four hours a day, inviting members of the public to join her in conversation.<sup>46</sup> The artist admits that this form of public performance is often met with an initial sense of bemusement or indifference. Nonetheless, she maintains that public faculties work as a way of gradually interacting with people to develop conversations about the conditions that they face in their neighbourhood, and that these only begin to happen by spending time on site. Van Heeswijk goes on to suggest that even if the issues raised in public faculties are perhaps predictable before the exercise (cleaner spaces, safer places, more greenery, more democratic and transparent decision-making), the process of performing these faculties with people is critical in building relationships and developing the more precise questions that might go on to generate a project.<sup>47</sup> From there, the process is highly dependent on who becomes involved and what issues are raised. It could be about creating an event

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<sup>43</sup> Jeanne van Heeswijk, 'Taking Matters into Your Own Hands' (University of Sheffield, School of Architecture, 2013).

<sup>44</sup> van Heeswijk, 'Taking Matters into Your Own Hands'; Kwon, *One Place after Another*, p. 95.

<sup>45</sup> van Heeswijk, 'Taking Matters into Your Own Hands'.

<sup>46</sup> van Heeswijk, 'PhD Research Interview with Jeanne van Heeswijk, Creator of Homebaked / Anfield Home Tour'.

<sup>47</sup> van Heeswijk, 'Taking Matters into Your Own Hands'.

or performance to generate discussion around a local conflict between different groups, access to a public space, or broader political issues such as immigration and the right to work.

### **7.2.2 Funding (opportunity)**

After creating projects in cities including Rotterdam, Skopje and Copenhagen, Jeanne van Heeswijk was invited to Anfield in 2010 as part of the Liverpool Biennial. The project was formed around the idea of working with a group of young residents in the district of Anfield. Following the commission from the Biennial, Van Heeswijk began the process of orchestrating local participation in the project and working with local people to determine the key issues around which a project might be shaped. As the site context section of this chapter indicated, the local reaction to the stalled HMR regeneration policy and a large stock of vacant and derelict housing quickly emerged as a central driver, although van Heeswijk was also interested in introducing ideas of retrofit and DIY / self-build.<sup>48</sup> This led to the involvement of urban design practice URBED and the beginning of the '2Up 2Down' project (see Figure 7.5). The project borrowed its name from the traditional model of Anfield terraced housing typified by two rooms on at ground level and two rooms upstairs

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<sup>48</sup> Bryony Spottiswoode, '2UP 2DOWN: A Critical Ethnography and the Mapping of Powerplay' (unpublished MArch, University of Sheffield, School of Architecture, 2012), p. 46.

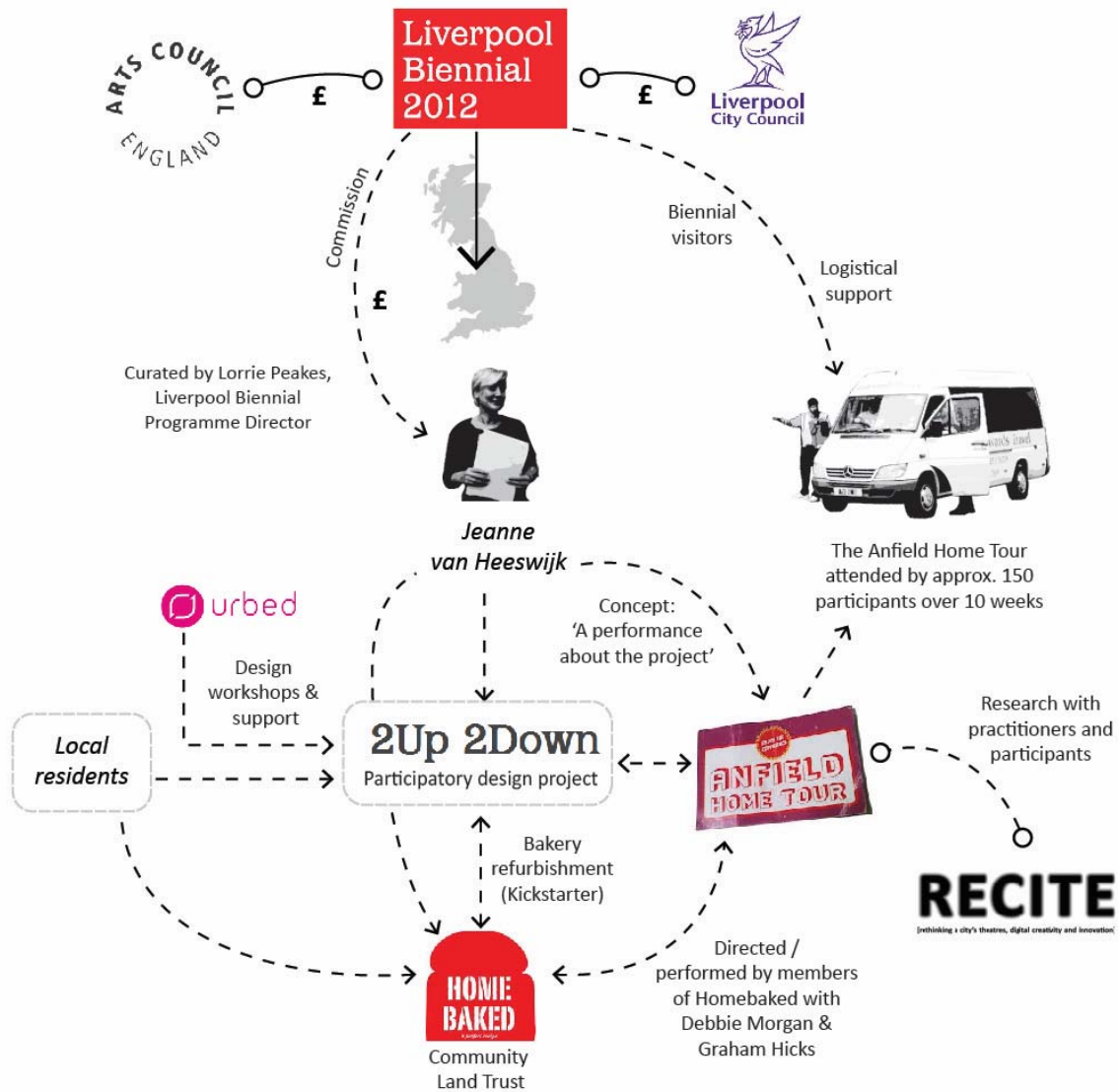


Figure 7.5. Anfield Home Tour stakeholder and funding diagram. Image: author.

### 7.2.3 '2 Up 2 Down' and Mitchell's Bakery

Out of the original Biennial commission, '2Up 2Down' developed as a participatory project that took local residents as a 'client'. The artist and urban designers worked directly with a group of young people to reimagine Anfield, both at neighbourhood scale and in relation to a specific block of terraced housing on Walton Breck Road (opposite Liverpool Football Club). As part of the 2Up 2Down initiative, van Heeswijk and Liverpool Biennial rented Mitchell's Bakery in Anfield to convert it into a physical hub for the project. The bakery, which also formed part of the 2Up 2 Down terraced block, was previously earmarked for demolition as part of the HMR regeneration plans for the area,

forcing the family owners to close after 85 years.<sup>49</sup> Van Heeswijk used part of the budget from the Biennial commission to rent the Bakery for final two years remaining on its lease, working with URBED to refurbish and transform it into a hub of the activities for the 2Up 2Down project. This included both hand-on activities with the young people's group and other workshops and events to engage with the wider local community, with the history and identity of Anfield, and its future potential. The bakery project subsequently developed its own momentum and a group of local volunteers, known collectively as 'Homebaked', emerged with a proposal to reopen the building as a functioning community bakery. Despite the apparent success of the bakery as a focal point for participation (and ongoing support from curator Lorrie Peakes), the Biennial institution were keen that van Heeswijk also presented the project in some tangible public form:

*"there was a lot of questioning within the Biennial Board about was this project 'art'. They quite often said "we're not into housing", "we're not into a bakery", or "we're not into any of that", I thought it also might be a good moment to actually make a piece about the project - so to turn it around - the project's not the piece (of art) but to make a piece around the project."*<sup>50</sup>

Therefore in the midst of the ongoing activities, the Homebaked group dedicated a lot of time to the question of how the project (and the underlying events happening in Anfield) might be related or represented to a wider public within the framework of the Biennial art festival.

### 7.3 PRODUCTION

#### 7.3.1 Local participation

The complex and overlapping roles played by individuals involved in the 2Up 2Down / Homebaked project is typified by Britt Jurgensen, an Anfield resident and theatre-maker (previously with Fool's Proof Theatre), who joined the project as a volunteer at the bakery and was later invited to direct *The Anfield Home Tour*. As a spatial and social focal point for the numerous individuals involved in different aspects of the project, the bakery also provided Jurgensen with a space to meet people and share stories about the experience of living through HMR. For example, Fred Brown, local resident and performer in the Home Tour, describes how his involvement came about as a result of an informal conversation with the Jurgensen:

*"I'd been having just a general conversation – we'd talked about things that were going on in the area. I was telling the story about this particular individual (a regeneration official) coming*

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<sup>49</sup> Spottiswoode, p. 56.

<sup>50</sup> 'PhD Research Interview with Jeanne van Heeswijk, Creator of Homebaked / Anfield Home Tour'.

*down for this publicity stunt. It wasn't long after that Britt asked me if I fancied including it in the tour."*

While many stories of HMR were shared through the bakery in this way, others emerged out of everyday conversations and a snowballing effect, where local residents suggested and introduced others that might also have a story to tell. Jurgensen describes how she ended up with a wealth of material for the performance, some of which was considered to be too emotionally raw to be used with public participants. The director feared that certain stories - of people who passed away while in a state of anxiety and uncertainty over their house - might cross a certain ethical threshold, where people might feel manipulated and, perhaps more significantly, friends and family members may still have been going through a grieving process.<sup>51</sup>

### 7.3.2 Scripting

Alongside local novelist Debbie Morgan, Jurgensen spent a great deal of time immersed in about the area - walking and driving the streets to find a way of pulling these individual stories together into a broader narrative. Together they conceived 'Carl' - a central character around whom they could build a narrative. Carl was imagined as a lifelong resident, part-time comedian and 'tour guide' of Anfield. It was agreed that the pressure of constructing and holding together this central role required a professional performer - a decision related not only to the particular skills required to learn lines, perform and entertain a group of strangers, but also the practical demands of being relied upon to turn up every week.<sup>52</sup> Local comedian and actor Graham Hicks was brought in to develop this role and introduce his own stories of growing up nearby. Stories from residents of Anfield were then given to Graham to re-tell and through his (scripted) narrative, he passed these on as stories from Carl's friends or relatives. Others agreed to tell their own stories first-hand, a process that brought out people's natural abilities in a way which helped to develop their own role in the project. These stories also drew upon the skills of a performer - in the choice of story, the rehearsed body language, and the refined or polished narrative.

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<sup>51</sup> Jurgensen, 'PhD Research Interview with Britt Jurgensen, Anfield Home Tour Director'.

<sup>52</sup> Jurgensen, 'PhD Research Interview with Britt Jurgensen, Anfield Home Tour Director'.

## 7.3.3 Structure

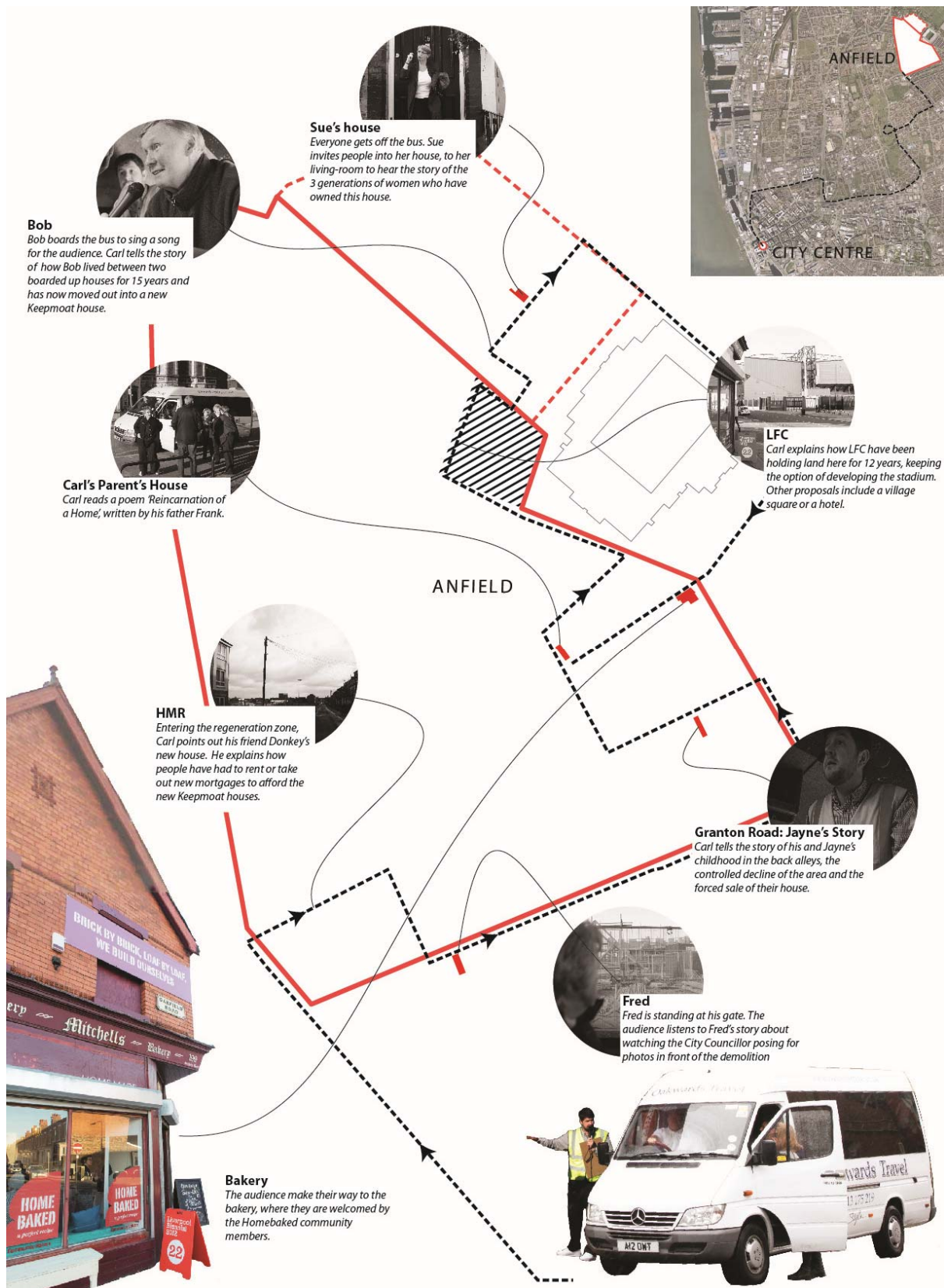


Figure 7.6. Anfield Home Tour structure. Image reproduced from interviews / AHT original script and overlaid onto Anfield and Breckfield regeneration plan. Image: author.



## 7.4 PERFORMANCE

### 7.4.1 First-hand account

The following text is written as a direct response to *The Anfield Home Tour*, in which I participated in on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2012. The documentary photographs used to illustrate the text are all copyright Jeanne van Heeswijk and are used with the permission of the artist.

#### THE ANFIELD HOME TOUR

*The experience of the 2012 Liverpool Biennial so far has not been a good one, particularly compared to previous years. The programme feels less cohesive and the guidebook less clear, perhaps due to the reported reduction in funding. It is also nearly 11am and I've yet to tick off many exhibitions, but this is principally because I have been fighting past the Liverpool One shoppers on the walk down from Lime Street to the Cunard Building – the departure point for the main event of the day - a somewhat mysterious bus tour performance entitled 'the Anfield Home Tour'. The morning is not aided by the confusion outside - apparently there's been some sort of mix-up and too many people have been booked on the tour. We keep our heads down and climb aboard the minibus.*

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*As we get going our enigmatic host, Carl, immediately lifts the spirits of the group with some upbeat chatter and attempts to start a sing-song. Our House by Madness is apparently an old favourite of his Uncle (our driver), but for me it immediately brings to mind the recent Jubilee performance on top of Buckingham Palace. At this point there is still a certain amount of trepidation about exactly where we are going or what we'll be doing when we get there, but its 'art' so what's the worst that can happen? I also remember that there is something uniquely relaxing about sitting on a minibus – perhaps linked back to all of those school trips – where someone else is in charge so you just have to try to enjoy the journey and follow their instructions. This comfortable feeling is aided by Carl chatting on in his strong Liverpudlian accent, using a portable microphone and giving us a potted history of the route along with the back story of how he came to become a local tour guide.*




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*At Everton Brow, Carl tells us that we are all getting out to take a look at the view. As we troop off the bus, the looks exchanged by the fellow passengers suggests a sense that we are beginning to bond as an ‘audience’- a group of participants who are undertaking this adventure together. These looks also suggest questions like ‘do you know what we’re going to be doing?’. The view back across to the city centre, the Three Graces and the Mersey is quite incredible. To this point, I hadn’t appreciated that Liverpool was a city with enough variation in topography produce this kind of (Sheffield-like) vista. Carl, equipped with clipboard and high-visibility jacket, launches into a description of how the area immediately below us has developed. This is quite obviously charged with a personal politics, as we hear about the demolition of the slum terraced housing to make way for the tower blocks, which were themselves then demolished when the urban design and planning orthodoxy changed yet again. Carl describes the separation of longstanding friends, neighbours and family members in a plan that saw residents of the towers being offered in the newly-built suburban townships of Kirkby and Skelmersdale. The remaining ‘parkland’ remains a vacant dumping ground. Feeling somewhat emotionally shaken, we re-enter the bus, with a promise from Carl that we are now off to some ‘real life’ regeneration.*



The streets around the Breckfield Road are a far cry from the gloss of the Biennial and Liverpool One, despite only being a few miles drive. Opposite a tanning parlour Carl instructs us out once again for a 'photo opportunity' in front of the purple sign that declares we have now entered the 'Anfield and Breckfield Regeneration Zone'. While this feels like a slightly more forced attempt to bond the group, the detail (and obvious false hope) provided by the sign at least offers some clues about what's to come.



As the bus takes a zig-zagging route through the area, the tour is obviously trying to demonstrate the stark contrast between the terraced houses occupied by the last few residents, the completed new-build housing and the expanse of the demolished sites - fenced off and apparently awaiting the next phase of construction. Markedly different conditions are observable on opposite sides of the same street - as passengers we are busily craning our necks side to side to try and take it all in. It suddenly strikes me that I am gazing at peoples home in a way that I wouldn't do if I had happened to be in

*the neighbourhood – but then why else would I be here? Perhaps to watch a football match at the famous stadium to which the area lends its name? This train of thought is broken by a boy on the bus who seems to surprise Carl by excitedly pointing to one of the new houses and yelling ‘look mum - that’s where we live!’ These new houses look shiny and still-tidy, but the way that they are semi-detached and set back from the road by block-paving drives feels alien to the terraces they have replaced.*



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*Continuing into the heart of Anfield, we ‘bump into’ a number of long-time residents (or perhaps these are performers?) who have lived or still live right in amongst the demolition. Fred, ready to greet the bus from his steps, conveys the emotional impact of living opposite the demolition through a moving story about seeing his neighbour’s bedroom wallpaper for the first ever time when the front of their house opposite was torn down. Venturing further into the heart of Anfield, we next greet Bob - pensioner, singer and all-round charmer. His story is even more tragic, as he was forced to sell his house at a deflated price and, at the age of 80, had to take out a Council loan to buy back a replacement home. By now the narrative is becoming clear - the encounters make Carl visibly upset and, despite his black humour, this palpable sadness transfers through to us as his audience.*



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*Further tragic stories are still come. Our next stop is Sue's house, where everyone is invited to step off the bus again and take a look inside her home. She describes how the house has been handed down through three generations of women in her family. We stand somewhat awkwardly, twenty strangers in a stranger's living room on a bright Saturday morning in Anfield. But despite her underlying anger at her situation, Sue has incredible warmth as she invites us take a seat and listen to the story of how her beautiful Victorian home came to be under threat of demolition. Having watched from the behind the windows of the bus, this simple invitation to sit and listen in the comfort of her living room feels immediately intimate and incredibly generous, and so it is heartbreaking to hear her stories of living amongst the dereliction of a street that has been stripped out by compulsory purchase orders and absent landlords who have failed to maintain some of the other houses on the street. Meanwhile back on the bus, Carl expresses his frustration at the treatment of those in limbo. He directs further anger at his beloved football club Liverpool FC, whose multi-million pound turnover may further benefit from the abandonment of the nearby streets, the demolition of which may enhance the likelihood of achieving their own redevelopment plans.*






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*In the final resolution of the piece, we reach our destination, Mitchells Bakery, and are treated to a cup of tea and cake at the Homebaked project. Here we get the chance to meet and chat to the people involved in all of the different local projects initiated by van Heeswijk. We also discover that our lovable tour guide Carl Ainsworth is actually a fictional character - scripted and played to a tee by local comedian Graham Hicks. Participants are provided with a copy of the script to read on the return journey (which includes all of Carl's 'ad-libbed' humour). Although we have been directly confronted by the 'truth' of the terrible dereliction of Anfield, these fictional elements of the tour begin to make me question who and what are 'authentic' and what else might have been scripted. For a just moment these revelations leave me a bit empty – a feeling discussed with fellow participants on the bus journey back into the city centre. However this hollowness soon gives way to a wider feeling of resentment at the treatment of the real residents and their homes, and finally, an even greater respect for the performance and the way it has given a voice to a handful of the hundreds of Anfield stories of loss, despair and hope.*



## 7.5 REFLECTION/ EVALUATION

As previously indicated, issues around the timing of access to this performance as a case study precluded the deployment of the full range of methods described in the previous chapters. Critical discussions arising from the project are, therefore, based on the analysis of in-depth interviews with performance-makers and selected performers, together with my own experience of the performance. This is set within the context of the wider aims of the project and informed by perspectives from literature and discussions with the local housing association (Arena Housing) on the future regeneration in the area following the collapse of HMR.

### 7.5.1 The critical value of site-specific performance

*The Anfield Home Tour* is distinct from many of the other site-specific performances examined in this research. The way in which it emerged as a means of representing a broader community struggle meant that the performance was underpinned by some fairly overt political or activist aims. Perhaps the most prominent of these aims was to challenge the dominant policy-led narrative of HMR in Anfield - a narrative that had depicted the area as 'unsalvageable'. With wide-scale demolition and reconstruction put forward by as the only effective way forward, relatively limited space was left for meaningful dialogue with the local community. Jurgensen argues that this encouraged the development of one 'official' version of events, depicting a failing neighbourhood, and, therefore (perhaps inadvertently), encouraging the emergence of other more insidious narratives. These

include the impression that local people must have let the area go into decay, or ‘brought it upon themselves’, and that any campaigns against the redevelopment is simply a case of ‘difficult’ people resistant to modernisation. The adverse reaction to the destructive process of HMR created the conditions and community momentum for the project to develop, with van Heeswijk taking on the role of activator to tap into this sense of anger and frustration and redirect it into the production of an active network of citizens – albeit within the context of a participatory art project.

One of the starting points for this thesis was the suggestion that the critical value of collaboration between performance-makers and spatial practitioners (architects and urbanists) lies in the relative level of creative freedom enjoyed by performance practitioners. While this notion is contested by some authors, previous discussions of instrumentalisation (in chapter 4) have also highlighted the importance of artists and performance practitioners in being able to work independently of the ‘neutralising’ effects of bureaucratic oversight.<sup>53</sup> In Anfield, van Heeswijk and others were permitted a freedom to produce a performance that exposed the human cost of the regeneration process in the neighbourhood. The critical voice of *the Anfield Home Tour* had the potential to cause significant political discomfort within Liverpool City Council, which is linked directly in terms of funding and administration to the Biennial. Beyond the immediate participants involved in the Biennial (and the ripple-out effect of their responses), the performance also gained significant media attention through the local press. In this sense, the creators of the tour suggest that the aim of gaining visibility worked ‘almost too well’, with Jurgensen describing a great deal of (mis)reporting by journalists who had not experienced the piece first-hand.<sup>54</sup>

In assessing the critical value of this particular performance piece, is essential to put the events around the 2012 Biennial into the wider context. HMR was a policy conceived by University of Birmingham researchers, adopted by central New Labour government, and implemented through the creation of regional Pathfinder programmes, and scrapped wholesale midway through by a coalition government that continues to be deeply unpopular in the area.<sup>55</sup> A number of concerns had already been raised in the middle of the HMR programme at government committee level, by charities and campaign groups, and in academic research. These concerns included the impact on communities and older people, insufficient levels of consultation, the absence of community-led proposals, widespread and ‘unnecessary’ demolition of Victorian heritage, and the affordability gap

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<sup>53</sup> Kelley; Chapple and Jackson, pp. 480–481.

<sup>54</sup> Jurgensen, ‘PhD Research Interview with Britt Jurgensen, Anfield Home Tour Director’.

<sup>55</sup> Following the 2010 General Election results, Liverpool Walton ward (which includes Anfield) is considered the safest Labour seat in the UK with a majority of 57.7% (72% share). The Conservative Party’s share of the vote is just 6.5%, and the Liberal Democrats’ share is 14.2%.



between the CPO valuation and the cost of an equivalent new-build home in the area.<sup>56</sup> Subsequent criticism of the handling of the winding up of the programme, with local Councils and housing associations left to pick up the pieces has also been reported. In the light of these developments, the significance of *the Anfield Home Tour* (and the Liverpool Biennial) as a vehicle to openly criticise HMR is perhaps less relevant - and is perhaps less effective in terms changing policy given its timing in relation to previous political decisions. There is some evidence of this in the approach of Arena Housing, a local housing association that had been implicated in HMR but are now trying to repair some of the damage to the neighbourhood by refurbishing and converting some of the housing previously earmarked for demolition.

Despite these question marks over its wider political impact, *the Anfield Home Tour* is still an important case study, particularly in terms of the way it used performance (alongside other physical interventions such as the bakery) to try to shape a new narrative for Anfield. This aim involved the deliberate telling of a story - humanising of the people involved, sparking new conversations at local and Council level, giving greater visibility to the residents affected, and, to a certain extent, acting as a kind of 'healing process'. It highlighted the value of talking and listening to people as a way of understanding the neighbourhood as comprising of different social values, stories, and memories that cannot necessarily be measured in terms of property values or the perceived 'quality' of the fabric of existing housing stock.

Van Heeswijk also demonstrated an awareness of how to employ different narratives at different times to create the greatest effect (or 'affect'). The decision of the performance-makers to host a session for a post-performance dialogue with participants was one of the unique aspects of *the Anfield Home Tour*, marking it out from the previous case study and most of the other site-specific performances investigated during the course of this research. The bakery, which hosted these sessions, has been described as performing the role of a 'cute' and optimistic face of the project, while aspects of *the Anfield Home Tour* were perhaps more ambivalent about the future of the neighbourhood. Both Jurgensen and Brown describe the 'emotional journey' that was reported by a significant number of participants, a description echoed by myself and several of the other passengers that experienced the tour in October 2012.<sup>57</sup> The mixing of entertainment and humour with some of residents' tragic stories was particularly 'affective'. This is testament to the skill of the performance-makers and writers and demonstrates further evidence (following the debate

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<sup>56</sup> Public Accounts Committee, pp. 5–6.

<sup>57</sup> Fred Brown, PhD Research interview with Fred Brown, Anfield Home Tour Performer, 2013; Jurgensen, 'PhD Research Interview with Britt Jurgensen, Anfield Home Tour Director'.

introduced in chapter 2) to support a model of performance that can entertain and move a group of participants at the same time as having political use-value.

From an architectural research perspective, the analysis of this performance is somewhat dominated by the paradoxical nature of the (participatory) performance as an instrument.<sup>58</sup> Chapter 4 highlighted the various efforts to deploy the arts as an instrument to achieve a particular set of political goals. The way in which a site-specific performance was created and deployed in Anfield was also politically charged, with the performance-makers also seeking to manipulate the existing conditions within which a neighbourhood regeneration is carried out (albeit from a more progressive or radical perspective). The external impression of the project is therefore of a community unified around a common enemy of HMR and the handling of the process by NewHeartlands and Liverpool City Council. It is beyond the scope of this case-study to suggest whether *The Anfield Home Tour* or the Homebaked group spoke for the whole community, or as Kwon puts it, whether the project created a community of 'mythic unity'.<sup>59</sup> In a research interview following the Biennial, Jurgensen accepted that the tour was to certain extent a political strategy, but justified this by arguing that other more powerful agencies involved in the process (politicians and regeneration officers) are 'performing' their own narrative.<sup>60</sup> One example of this is the exclusion of other potential stakeholders in the area (Arena, Liverpool FC) in order to maintain the unity of the community. This underlines the importance of the 'community' becoming organised and united behind a counter-narrative, even if this becomes exaggerated or 'performed' to increase its effectiveness (or 'affective-ness'). However by developing the performance from the skills of those within the group van Heeswijk has stressed that *The Anfield Home Tour* represents a grounded and contested representation of the site, rather than her singular interpretation.

### 7.5.2 Working from within

The nature of the relationship between the Anfield residents, the creators of *the Anfield Home Tour* and the Biennial are complex and require further examination. As a recent participatory project in a politically charged and contested environment, this analysis might contribute to recent critical readings of participatory arts practice put forward by authors such as Beech, Bishop, Kwon, and Kester. Lacy has described the conflict faced by socially-engaged artists - wanting to become more engaged and perhaps effect social change but remain outside as social critic. More recently Jackson has critiqued the 'myth' of the independent artist by highlighting the politicised relationships that

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<sup>58</sup> Chapple and Jackson, pp. 480–481.

<sup>59</sup> Kwon, *One Place after Another*, p. 118.

<sup>60</sup> Jurgensen, 'PhD Research Interview with Britt Jurgensen, Anfield Home Tour Director'.

are required in order to be commissioned, funded, written about, and rewarded.<sup>61</sup> As well as supporting the project financially, the Biennial lent a certain prestige to the narrative that the performance and the bakery were trying to tell. Van Heeswijk describes how this way of working requires participatory artists to 'get their hands dirty' (i.e. working with the potentially gentrifying forces of the Biennial). Working in this way requires experience and use of tactical practice in the way that funding is spent and the objectives of the Biennial board were met.

The questions around participation become more difficult when an external Biennial Festival audience is invited into a community and, in the case of *the Anfield Home Tour*, inside someone's living room. By bringing participants into her home to tell her story, Sue was inviting a transgression of private space that perhaps reflected or challenged the sense of invasion and destruction many residents felt had been inflicted on them by HMR. Given the intense level of emotional investment required, one might assume that this was the act of desperation of someone with so much at stake, or perhaps nothing left to lose. The director of *The Anfield Home Tour* insists that it was only ethically responsible to let local performers commit to this level of emotional investment **if** they were already deeply embedded in the project (with the associated support network and social capital).

Further ethical questions remain around reputational and social artistic capital gained by artists such as van Heeswijk in this form of practice. This is particularly important when considering the imbalance of what is at stake for those involved. While (in this case) participants may still be facing the loss of a home and devastation of a neighbourhood, the artist often departs from the site having enhanced their professional and artistic reputation. As Kester reminds us, there is also a potential gain for the Liverpool Biennial as an institution, both in terms of taking credit for a social outreach programme or gaining artistic/curatorial capital for supporting a potentially 'edgy' piece of participatory performance. In developing her practice, van Heeswijk contends that measures are put in place to avoid such exploitation, such as sharing space, credit, and financial rewards to co-creators wherever possible, and maintaining horizontal decision-making structures and equal payment practices. Despite this, she readily admits that discrepancies exist in participatory practices whereby the gains made by the practitioner (particularly in terms of reputation economy and social capital) are out of step with what is gained by the community participants.<sup>62</sup> Nonetheless, van Heeswijk was keen to reiterate that the end goals of her practice are not community uplift, but to suggest future scenarios where people feel a greater ability to act and change their neighbourhood and resources

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<sup>61</sup> Jackson.

<sup>62</sup> van Heeswijk, 'PhD Research Interview with Jeanne van Heeswijk, Creator of Homebaked / Anfield Home Tour'.

and social capital are shared more fairly. To turn Beech's criticism on its head, this suggests an approach to participatory arts practice that aims to expose some of structural cracks in society, rather than papering over them.<sup>63</sup>

## 7.6 Postscript (aftermath)

*In March 2013 the Homebaked Community Land Trust (CLT) set up a successful crowd funding campaign for a new bakery oven. During a second phase of refurbishment in summer and autumn 2013, the bakery was fitted out with the oven and professional equipment. Much of the work was achieved through voluntary efforts and using reclaimed materials from the original building. The bakery, which runs as a social enterprise, opened in October 2013. It employs a two local professional part-time bakers, a shop front manager/cook, a part-time shop front person and an apprentice. An outreach programme is being planned, including a baking scheme with local schools and a young people's business scheme.<sup>64</sup>*

*As well as remodelling and refitting the bakery, the CLT now aim to provide affordable homes for local people whose needs have not been addressed by the HMR regeneration programme. In developing these homes, the Trust have committed to a community-led process, including engagement with local people in the design process and the employment of a local workforce in the construction. Once the model is proven, the CLT aim to develop further housing-with-workspace 'blocks' in the local area.<sup>65</sup>*

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<sup>63</sup> Beech.

<sup>64</sup> Homebaked, 'Bakery History' <<http://homebaked.org.uk/history/>> [accessed 3 March 2014].

<sup>65</sup> Homebaked, 'Homebaked Community Land Trust' <<http://www.2up2down.org.uk/about/egestas-elit/>> [accessed 3 March 2014].

## 8 The Port of Sheffield audio-walk: Looking, listening, and leaving traces in the Lower Don Valley, Sheffield

**The Port of Sheffield audio-walk (2012-13).** Original concept by Deborah Egan (The Blue Shed). Co-devised and co-produced by Deborah Egan, Adam Park (RECITE), and Martin Hogg, with original contributions from local artists, musicians, residents, and other users of the Sheffield and Tinsley Canal.

*“Drawn from historical research and local voices, the Port of Sheffield tells the story of the Sheffield’s East End - the crucible of the city’s wealth and history. As you walk along the towpath, the mobile app will trigger GPS-located audio and visuals, revealing some of the personal stories, memories, and music of the Lower Don Valley.”<sup>1</sup>*



**An audio journey to the heart of Sheffield.**

The Port of Sheffield Digital Trail is a three mile audio journey from Victoria Quays in the City Centre to Tinsley Locks. Drawn from historical research and local voices, it tells stories about the city’s East End. These are delivered digitally to your smartphone or mp3 player.

The event is free and open to anyone with access to a GPS/3G enabled smartphone (Android/iPhone) or mp3 player. Download the FREE app or mp3 audio files from Friday 21st September 2012 at:

**[www.thePortofSheffield.co.uk](http://www.thePortofSheffield.co.uk)**

During the Festival of the Mind, our team will be at Victoria Quays, on board the narrow boat ‘LENA’ to help get you started.

**Friday 21<sup>st</sup> - Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2012**

**FESTIVAL OF THE MIND**

Logos for sponsors: BLUE SHED, BBC, blue loop, calder valley, The University of Sheffield.

Figure 8.1. Port of Sheffield promotional material produced for the 2012 Festival of the Mind. The project’s name and nautical iconography was as a play on the landlocked nature of Sheffield.

<sup>1</sup> ‘Introduction to the Port of Sheffield audio-walk’, 2012 <<http://www.theportofsheffield.co.uk>>. As of July 2014, the original Port of Sheffield web domain ceased to be operational. An archive/ legacy version of the audio-walk web app is available at <<http://mapcodebuild.co.uk/PoS>>.

### 8.1 Introduction

*The Port of Sheffield audio-walk* developed out of a collaboration between Sheffield-based theatre producer The Blue Shed, local sound artist/ recordist Martin Hogg, and myself in my role as RECITE PhD candidate within the University of Sheffield (School of Architecture). The work first emerged from the personal artistic practice of Deborah Egan, Creative Director of The Blue Shed - a theatre venue and production house based in Brightside area of Sheffield in the Lower Don Valley. The model of site-specific practice conceived by Egan uses performance as a means of encouraging interaction between people and place. *The Port of Sheffield audio-walk* embedded this idea within the context of Lower Don Valley, with the aim of bringing local communities and the wider Sheffield public to interact with this unique industrial/ post-industrial landscape. In order to realise this vision, Egan built up a working relationship with a number of institutional and community partners, including Sheffield Theatres, the University of Sheffield, independent artists, local businesses, and voluntary groups.

Over a period of nine months, stories were gathered from a wide range of local participants - people who have lived, worked, volunteered, or played on or near the canal. These stories, which relate to specific sites along the canal, were recorded and curated by the Port of Sheffield team. A free 'location-based' mobile application was developed, enabling the collection of stories, memories, and music to be embedded into (or overlaid onto) the route of the canal towpath. As public participants walked the three mile route their position was tracked via their GPS-enabled mobile smartphone and their movement became the trigger to play audio recordings (and display associated images) specific to their location.

The *Port of Sheffield audio-walk* was launched in September 2012 as part of the University of Sheffield 'Festival of the Mind' - a week-long programme of events designed to promote and celebrate creative collaboration between cultural organisations and academic researchers. For the duration of the Festival of the Mind, a launch point for the walk was established at the start point of the route - the Sheffield canal basin - to help participants set up the mobile application and start the walk. The nature of the audio-walk platform meant that it was also freely open to undertake at any times - it could (and still can) also be accessed and self-directed via the project website, with the required media files automatically downloaded based on the participant's GPS location. Because of this, the 'event' has no fixed end point and, therefore continues to be 'live', with team able to make periodic updates to add new audio-visual content and continue to promote the project via local/ social media, community events, and monthly guided walks.

Alongside the development of a public performance, the project involved a process of collaborative inquiry, which explored the idea of employing site-specific performance as way of encouraging participants to reflect upon issues of place, heritage and participation in the urban regeneration process, and perhaps allow them to begin to 'take ownership' of the landscape.<sup>2</sup> This inquiry has involved collaboration between (co)researchers and (co)practitioners across the different phases of the project - from the development of research questions and creative content of the audio-walk through to data collection methods and analysis. The production of the walk has therefore not just crossed disciplines (architecture, media, and performance) but combined practice, research, and community enterprise.

### 8.1.1 Purpose of case study

The purposes of *The Port of Sheffield audio-walk* as a research case study can be summarised as follows:

- The site of this performance in the Lower Don Valley in Sheffield was an opportunity to further develop and test the research questions within a site that shared several of the key characteristics of the two previous case-study sites (Hull Fruit Market and Anfield) - in its scale, post-industrial context, and recent complex history of urban regeneration proposals.
- The initiation of a collaborative and practice-led case study opened up the possibility of being involved first-hand in the phases of conception, design, and production. The collaborative development of the audio-walk also enabled tools for gathering and processing participant responses to be embedded directly into the experience of the walk.
- The audio-walk form provided an opportunity to engage with a third model of site-specific performance production - involving several phases of local community engagement, the design and development of the walk itself, and mobile interface. This long-term, first-hand involvement enabled the time for cyclical/ iterative testing and refining of engagement methods, and included time and space to reflect on the wider relationship between the project, the research questions, and my role within the project.

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<sup>2</sup> Deborah Egan, Recorded conversation with Deborah Egan, initiator of the Port of Sheffield project, 2013.

## 8.2 SITE

### 8.2.1 Spatial context

Like Hull, Sheffield is a city defined by its distinctive topography and recent industrial history. The rapid growth of the city during the Industrial Revolution played a fundamental role in determining how, as unlikely as it may appear, a city of this size could be developed on such steep gradients. For much of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, the city's urban development has been a process of modifying the landscape for the purposes of feeding a growing urban population and industrial output. These developments have produced what City Development Manager, Simon Ogden, suggests is an 'ugly, despoiled, brutalised townscape', with 'comparatively little of the kind of architectural quality, quaintness or elegance' of comparable northern cities (such as Leeds, Bradford, Liverpool, or even Hull). The result is a city 'almost totally devoted to production and very little to decoration'<sup>3</sup>. The industrial developments have not just remodelled the physical landscape but have also shaped the social geography of Sheffield. A report by the 'Social & Spatial Inequalities Research Group' (SASI) at the University of Sheffield discussed the factors that have come together to make Sheffield one of the most politically, socially, and economically polarised cities in the UK.<sup>4</sup> The stark contrast between north-east and south-west is illustrated by the deprivation map in Figure 9.2.

The SASI report also highlights the role that the urban topography has played in this polarisation. As the city grew during the early industrial revolution, the most appropriate terrain for industrial development was colonised in the Lower Don Valley to the east, immediately surrounded by the residential communities of Attercliffe, Darnall, and Brightside, which housed a significant proportion of the working population. Meanwhile, the landowners and industrial magnates built their own homes in the large leafy suburbs to the west, further away from the pollution and smoke of the factories. This legacy was reinforced in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by the construction of large swathes of social housing to the north of the Lower Don Valley - where land was more freely available and relatively underdeveloped. In contrast, the cultural, political and academic institutions became clustered in the central and western parts of Sheffield, surrounded by the more affluent residential communities and, beyond, the attraction of the Peak District National Park. Different individuals in Sheffield will, therefore, have very different perspectives of the city depending on where they enter the city, where they live, and where they work.

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<sup>3</sup> Ogden.

<sup>4</sup> B. Thomas and others, *A Tale of Two Cities: The Sheffield Project*. (Sheffield: Department of Geography, University of Sheffield, 2009)  
<[http://www.sasi.group.shef.ac.uk/research/sheffield/a\\_tale\\_of\\_2\\_cities\\_sheffield\\_project\\_final\\_report.pdf](http://www.sasi.group.shef.ac.uk/research/sheffield/a_tale_of_2_cities_sheffield_project_final_report.pdf)> [accessed 22 February 2013].



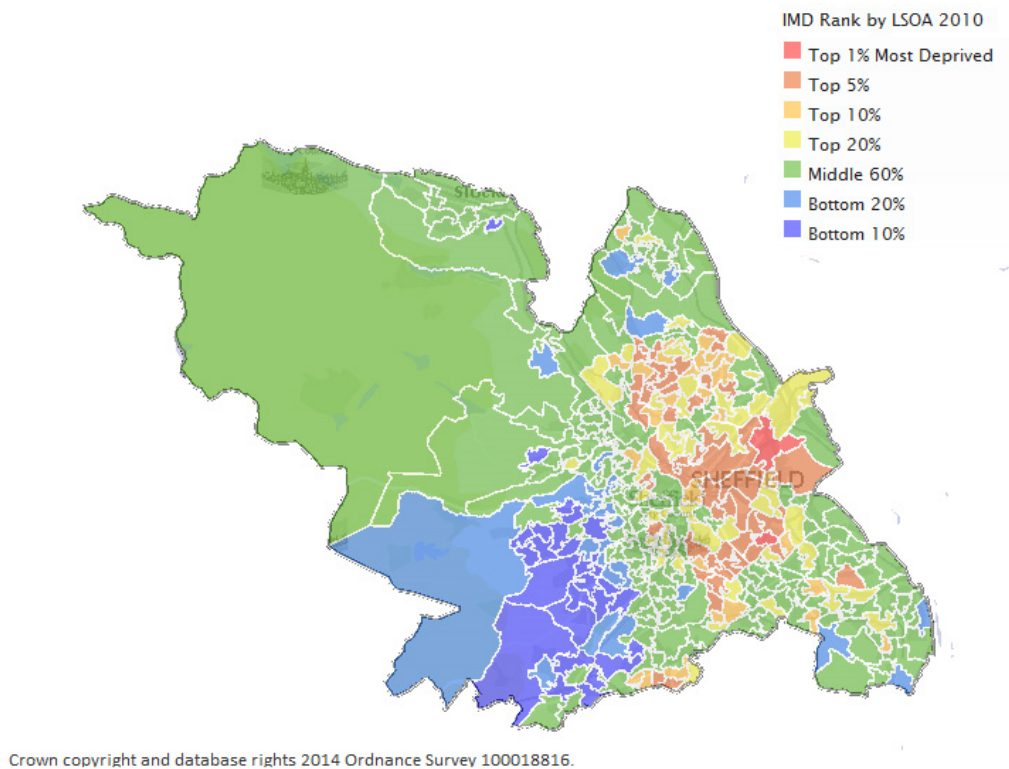


Figure 8.2. Map of Sheffield showing the index of multiple deprivation (2010). The economic divide in the city runs across the centre of the map from south-east to north-west. Image reproduced from Sheffield City Council <sup>5</sup>.

Urban regeneration and planning officers within Sheffield City Council identified the city centre as a way of linking these contrasting views of the city, and embarked on a programme of widespread urban renewal as a way of attracting new businesses, commercial and retail uses, and residential accommodation back to the city centre. The 'Heart of the City' regeneration programme, instigated by the City Council and developed by the Urban Regeneration Company 'Sheffield One', was proposed as a way of 'kick-starting' this process.<sup>6</sup> Much of this effort lies along the main axis of the city centre masterplan. Known as the 'Gold Route', this pedestrian route connects the train station, the 'Heart of the City' and the two university campuses. The secondary axis (the 'Steel Route') was (and still is) proposed as a means of linking the affluent suburbs in the south-west of the city to the less developed areas of light industrial sprawl immediately to the north-east of the city centre.

<sup>5</sup> Sheffield City Council, 'Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2010 Map' <<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/your-city-council/sheffield-profile/deprivation-statistics/Interactive-IMD-2010-Map.html>> [accessed 8 January 2014].

<sup>6</sup> Richard Evans and others, *Sheffield One Evaluation: Final Report* (European Institute for Urban Affairs, April 2007), p. 7 <[http://www.ljmu.ac.uk/EIUA/EIUA\\_Docs/Sheffield\\_One\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](http://www.ljmu.ac.uk/EIUA/EIUA_Docs/Sheffield_One_Final_Report.pdf)> [accessed 20 September 2013].

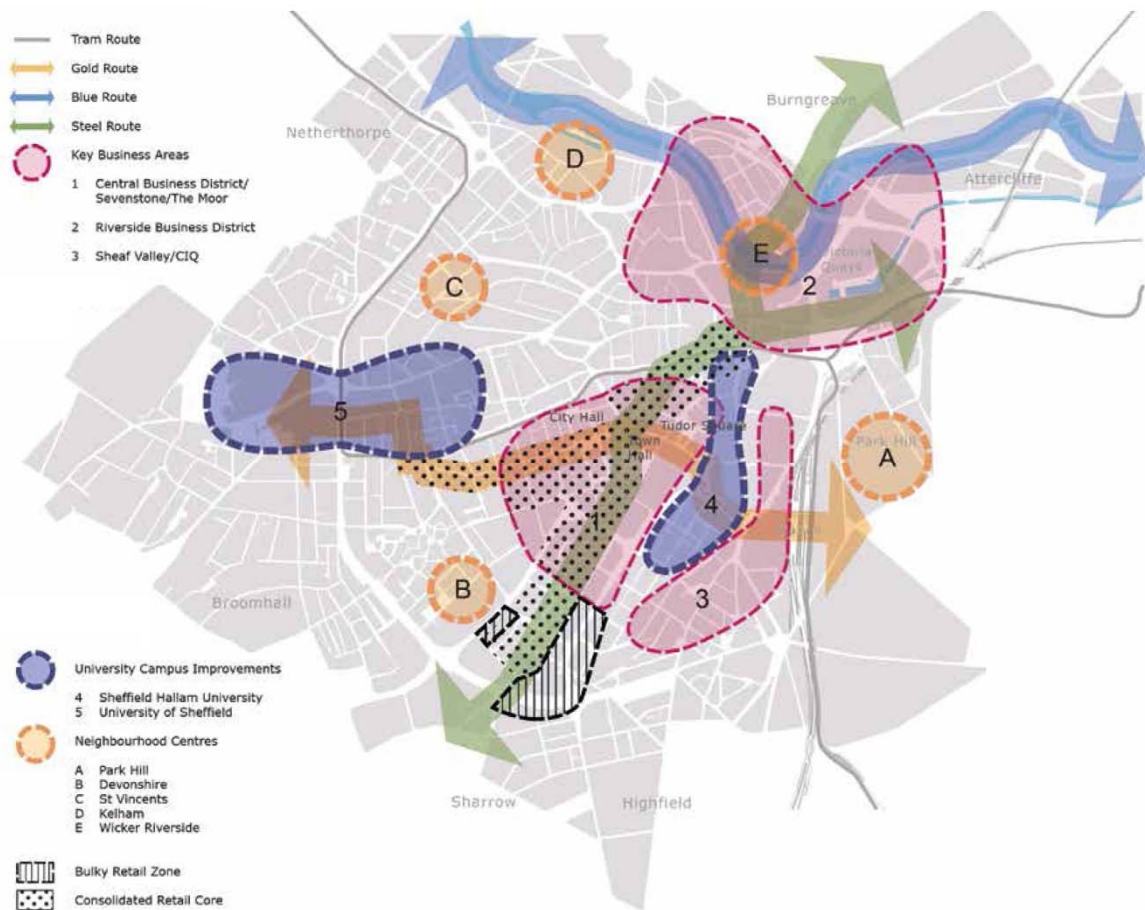


Figure 8.3. Sheffield City Centre Masterplan (2013 draft). The plan highlights the significance of the 'gold route' (gold arrows) and 'steel route' (green arrows). Image: Reproduced from SCC 2013 masterplan (draft) <<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/planning-and-city-development/planning-documents/background-reports/city-centre-masterplans-and-reports/city-centre-masterplan-2013.html>> [accessed 6 August 2013]

The steel route terminates at the canal basin - the focus of considerable regeneration investment in the late 1980s and early 1990s and rebranded as 'Victoria Quays'. The canal basin is now a mix of early 1990s commercial office and hotel developments that sit, somewhat uncomfortably, alongside a number of Grade II Listed Victorian warehouse buildings. The derelict railway arches, which were previously used as coal storage for the canal, were repurposed into a series of small commercial units, around half of which are now occupied by cafes, small businesses, and the owners of the Victoria Quays marina. Although numerous efforts have been made to attract more commercial and cultural activity to the site, the regenerated canal basin remains conspicuously underused. This observation, which was reiterated in conversations with local café owners and participants, is perhaps a consequence of the basin being surprisingly difficult to find despite lying less than a mile from the city centre. Should the long-awaited 'steel route' materialise, the canal basin has the

potential to become popular a destination in its own right, as well as acting as a gateway to the Lower Don Valley - the site for the Port of Sheffield.

### 8.2.2 Lower Don Valley

The site for *The Port of Sheffield audio-walk* is defined by the final three-mile stretch of the historic Sheffield & Tinsley Canal - a blue and green corridor that cuts through the industrial Lower Don Valley and passes close by a number of residential neighbourhoods (or former neighbourhoods) in north-east Sheffield. The canal dates back to 1819 when the opening of the Sheffield & Tinsley Canal linked Sheffield with the rest of the British waterway system and brought ships into the city centre for the first time. Plans for a canal had been proposed some 120 years previously, but attempts to construct a waterway were opposed by mill operators on the River Don, as well as the landowning Dukes of Norfolk, who managed to prevent construction until the early 1800s.<sup>7</sup> The first big railway company took over control of the Sheffield Canal Company in 1845 and over the next 50 years the canal became increasingly overshadowed as the rail transit expanded. Trade did continue along the canal up until the 1970s, but following years of neglect it was effectively derelict and designated as a 'remainder waterway'.<sup>8</sup> This dereliction was followed in the 1970s and early 80s by the wider decline of industrial activity in the Lower Don Valley, the legacy of which is still apparent today.



Figure 8.4. Panoramic view of the Lower Don Valley from the nearby Wincobank Hill. Image: Author.

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<sup>7</sup> David Hey, *Forging the Valley* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997).

<sup>8</sup> David Hey.

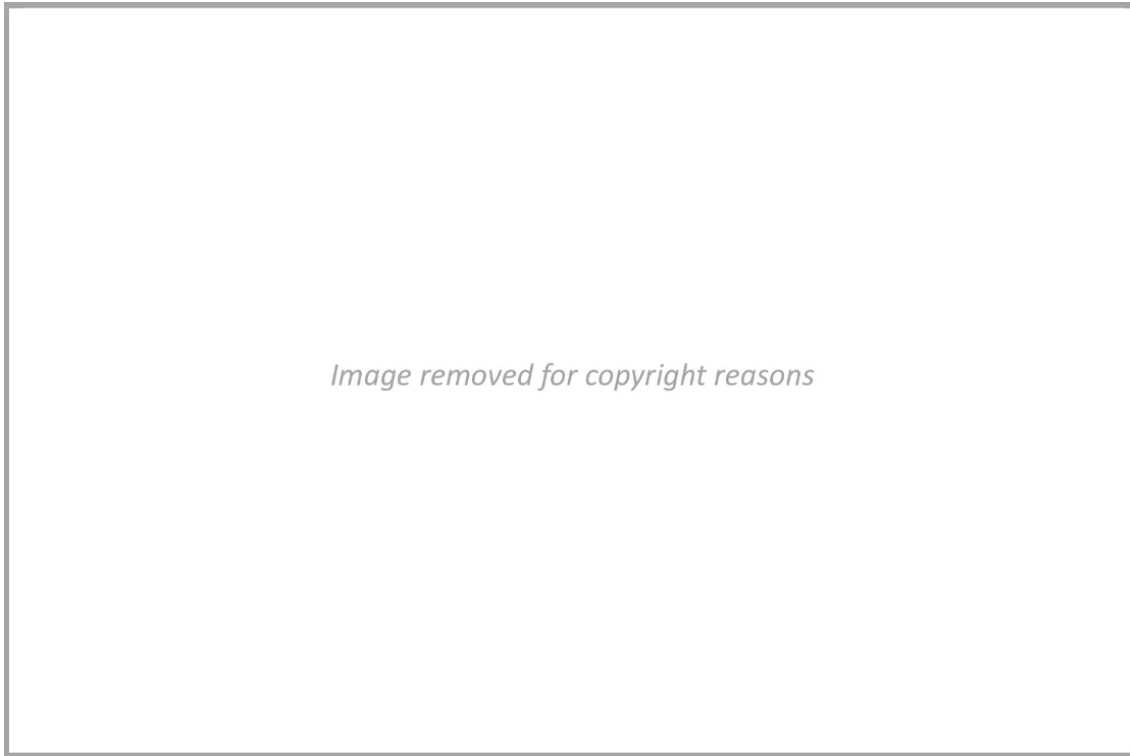


Figure 8.5. The Sheffield canal basin in the 1980s. Image: © Malcolm Fielding (local historian and former Adsetts Canal Project Coordinator).

While this narrative of de-industrialisation is repeated across a number of town and cities in the West Midlands and north of England, what is particularly striking about the Lower Don Valley site is the nature of the urban landscape created by local authority policy and subsequent efforts to regenerate the area. The recent history of the Lower Don Valley is closely tied to the City Council's planning and housing strategy in the post-war era, which was dominated by a policy of 'slum' clearances that favoured housing clearances to make way for the expansion of the steelworks.<sup>9</sup> Sheffield City Council deemed it to be unsuitable for people to live within the polluted environment created by heavy industry, while at the same time the relocation of entire neighbourhoods was also viewed as a way of creating space for those same industries to grow. Around the same time as these policies were being enacted, a number of major shocks to the steel industry and UK manufacturing sector proved disastrous for the city. During the period between 1974 and 1986, eight major manufacturing firms closed, while knock-on closures and restructuring measures in the steel industry caused overall employment in Sheffield to fall by 18,000.<sup>10</sup> The closure and dereliction of a series of large industrial works based in the Lower Don (including Brown Bayleys, Dunford Hadfields, and others) came at the same time that planning policies had depopulated a large part of the valley.

<sup>9</sup> Ogden.

<sup>10</sup> Gordon Dabinett, 'Local Policies towards Industrial Change: The Case of Sheffield's Lower Don Valley', *Planning Practice and Research*, 6 (1991), 13–18 (p. 13).

This prompted a 'crisis of orthodoxy' and critical shift in thinking around the complex issue of how to reuse the contaminated vacant land.<sup>11</sup>

In the early 1980s, a new approach emerged out of a partnership between the City Council and academics at Sheffield City Polytechnic (now Sheffield Hallam University). In 1984 the Council published the 'Employment and Environmental Plan' for the Lower Don Valley. This was produced as a new vision for the valley and, significantly, included an acknowledgment that the manufacturing industries could not be recreated at the scale at which they had previously existed.<sup>12</sup> Instead, the emphasis was on rebuilding employment through the development and support of smaller scale business and technology parks. The plan also highlighted the need to respond to the environmental degradation of the valley, which included the pollution of the river and canal, the contamination of land, and almost a complete absence of trees or vegetation. The strategy argued that in order to restore the area as a functioning part of the city, the natural environment required restoration, with particular focus placed on the green and blue corridors of the River Don and the canal.

The second key phase in the economic and physical renewal of the site began with the creation of the Sheffield Development Corporation (SDC) in 1988. This was one of a series of regeneration agencies to be created by central government with the aim of transferring certain planning decision-making away from local authorities. In Sheffield, the SDC was charged with the task of regenerating 2000 acres of the Lower Don and creating 20,000 jobs to replace those lost in the steel industry.<sup>13</sup> As part of the regeneration strategy, Sheffield became one of the first cities in the country to embrace sport and leisure as part of an economically-led masterplan. During this period, the city invested heavily into the Lower Don area, much of which was backed by the City Council and tied to three headline projects - Meadowhall, the Supertram, and the World Student Games of 1991. A number of other commercial and light industrial developments were attracted to the valley by the SDC, perhaps most notably 'Valley Centertainment' (a cinema, restaurant, and leisure complex). Despite the benefits of acquiring sporting facilities such as the National Institute for Sport and Sheffield Arena, Sheffield paid a huge price for the 1991 games, with a 2011 estimate from a BBC report putting Council debts resulting from the event at £658 million.<sup>14</sup> This expenditure is brought into sharper focus by the recent decision to demolish Don Valley stadium to save its annual running bill and the likely cost of repairing the stadium. Although the provision of elite sporting facilities had been a

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<sup>11</sup> Ogden.

<sup>12</sup> Dabinett, p. 14.

<sup>13</sup> Mike Raco, 'Business Associations and the Politics of Urban Renewal: The Case of the Lower Don Valley, Sheffield', *Urban Studies*, 34 (1997), 383–402 (p. 387).

<sup>14</sup> 'World Games £658m Debt "Disaster"', *BBC*, 14 July 2011, section Sheffield & South Yorkshire <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-south-yorkshire-14134973>> [accessed 20 September 2013].

central plank of the earlier urban regeneration plans, Ogden openly admits that this model has failed to produce the spin-off effects that might have helped to revive the area around the Don Valley Stadium in Attercliffe.<sup>15</sup> Others critics have condemned these flagship retail and leisure developments as purely ‘opportunistic’, with Dabinett arguing that that the poorly planned nature of these and other speculative developments in the area have eroded the valley as a coherent industrial district.<sup>16</sup>

*“both the Meadowhall development and the(student) games illustrate the easy appeal of the prestige project in achieving instant physical renewal, compared with the less visible though more substantial process of industrial reconstruction.”<sup>17</sup>*



Figure 8.6. Sheffield Arena and the Supertram viewed from one of the many canal bridges. Image: author.

While the leisure and retail destinations of Meadowhall, Sheffield Arena, and the nearby ‘Valley Centertainment’ have continued to attract visitors in large numbers, the canal and its immediate surroundings have remained relatively untouched. Although parts of the waterway were renovated in the 1990s in anticipation of increased recreational use, the canal and its towpath offer a relatively concealed, off-road route connecting the urban centres of Rotherham and Sheffield. The ‘forgotten’ space of the canal is more or less hidden behind the remaining industrial sheds and derelict works of

<sup>15</sup> Ogden.

<sup>16</sup> Dabinett, pp. 17–18.

<sup>17</sup> Dabinett, p. 15.



the valley, and even though the 'Supertram' route to Meadowhall broadly follows the canal, it can barely be seen during the 14 minute journey from the city centre. Sociologist Stephen Spencer has portrayed the Sheffield and Tinsley canal as an environment where industrial ruins (albeit interspersed with surviving industries) are being slowly reclaimed by nature. As part of this process, Spencer suggests that the landscape of the Lower Don Valley is revealing layers of 'dialectic change'.<sup>18</sup> Echoing Solà-Morales' notion of 'terrain vague', this dialectic change describes how the melancholy of a lost industrial era is mixed with the sense of optimism associated with new life.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, Hatherley has suggested that the particular qualities of these neglected sites and their 'sense of possibility' is what gives the urban landscape of Sheffield its unique character.<sup>20</sup> Although this notion of vegetation and wildlife 'reclaiming' urban space may have a certain romantic appeal, in reality the environmental improvements to the valley have also been supported by a series of social and political investments. This began with introduction of a small Council-backed agency in the 1980s, which began to implement some 'rudimentary' greening works - creating green corridors along the canal and river as an escape from the dereliction and surviving industrial uses.<sup>21</sup> These early efforts preceded the founding of the Five Weirs Trust to oversee the environmental improvements. As a charitable body, the Trust was able to leverage financial contributions and small parcels of land along the river from local businesses in order to establish a walking route along the River Don. Simon Ogden, one of the Council officials involved in the setting up of what became known as the 'Five Weirs Walk', describes the motivation behind this project:

*"A first step in people owning an area is if they are actually comfortable about walking through it. So it is particularly relevant to deindustrialised areas that have lost their function to re-establish a right of passage through them - and to make that something that is interesting and pleasurable."*<sup>22</sup>

Following on from this work, responsibility for maintaining the canal and river environments has transferred to the River Stewardship Council and a project known locally as the 'Blue Loop'. This project engages with local schoolchildren and volunteers, maintains and improves the green

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<sup>18</sup> Stephen Spencer, *Visual Research Methods in the Social Sciences: Awakening Visions* (London: Routledge, 2011), pp. 80–8.

<sup>19</sup> Spencer, pp. 80–8.

<sup>20</sup> Hatherley, p. 106.

<sup>21</sup> Ogden.

<sup>22</sup> Ogden.

corridors along the waterways, and has created a natural habitat where a range of fish, birds, plant life, otters, and bats are returning and thriving.<sup>23</sup>

### 8.2.3 Current regeneration proposals

Alongside the environmental improvements, one of the main motives for the restoration of the canal in the late 1980s and early 1990s was the potential to attract new residential and commercial waterfront investments along the length of the canal. According to Ogden, this was also part of the rationale for investing public money in the regeneration of Victoria Quays canal basin.<sup>24</sup> Throughout the years of industrial decline a corridor of light industrial works and scrapyards clung to the banks, but there was an expectation from the city planning authorities that following the closure of several of the major steelworks these residual industries would disappear. However this was not the case, and it was to take almost 20 years before the first major development opportunity was leveraged through a partnership between Sheffield City Council, British Waterways and Norfolk Estate. This site, known as Attercliffe Waterside, is highlighted in Figure 8.8.



Figure 8.7. A number of residual industrial uses occupy the western bank of the canal - near to the proposed regeneration sites. Image: Author.

<sup>23</sup> The Blue Loop, 'Wildlife on The Blue Loop' <<http://www.theblueloop.org/blueloop-wildlife/wildlife.aspx>> [accessed 3 December 2013].

<sup>24</sup> Ogden.



A second key 'canal-side' site is defined by the red line boundary of the Attercliffe Action Plan (also shown on Figure 8.8). The former busy high street of Attercliffe, since marooned by 'wasteland of clearance' in the 1970s and 1980s, has seen some limited redevelopment (a business park and some housing).<sup>25</sup> Published in 2011, the Attercliffe Action Plan put forward a 10-year plan to encourage private investment back into the area in the form of residential and commercial development, although there is very limited public money to support this regeneration.<sup>26</sup> The demolition of the nearby Don Valley Stadium will make way for another large redevelopment site that is being described in recent council documentation as the 'Advanced Park for Sport and Wellbeing'.<sup>27</sup> However, discussions with the Sheffield City Development Manager also indicate a possibility that the stadium site could be developed for residential or educational uses - proposals that would fit with the aspiration to bring a wider range of uses to the Attercliffe area and to support greater use of the Supertram.<sup>28</sup> Beyond the site of Don Valley stadium, the canal-side becomes increasingly difficult to redevelop. The 'sterilisation' of this land is largely due to the existing transport infrastructure of the railway, the road network, and the Supertram, which follows the line of the canal as far as Meadowhall retail complex. One parcel of land that has been earmarked for development is the site of the former Tinsley Wire plant, across the Supertram track from the Tinsley Marina (see Figure 8.8). Proposals for this large vacant site, which also marks the end point of *the Port of Sheffield audio-walk*, were put forward in 2013 by a multi-national furniture home-ware retailer, and approved by Sheffield City Council in June 2014.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Ogden.

<sup>26</sup> Sheffield City Council, *Attercliffe Action Plan 2011-2021* (Sheffield: Sheffield City Council, 2011) <<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/dms/scc/management/corporate-communications/documents/planning/Masterplans-and-Background-Reports/beyond-city-centre/attercliffe/Attercliffe-Action-Plan-2011-2021--pdf--3-05mb-.pdf>> [accessed 14 July 2014].

<sup>27</sup> Sheffield City Council, 'Don Valley Stadium: The Advanced Park for Sport and Wellbeing', 2013 <<http://donvalleymarketing.co.uk>> [accessed 2 December 2013].

<sup>28</sup> Ogden.

<sup>29</sup> 'Ikea's Long-Running Pursuit of Sheffield Site', *The Star* (Sheffield, 11 April 2013) <<http://www.thestar.co.uk/news/business/ikea-s-long-running-pursuit-of-sheffield-site-1-5570262>> [accessed 2 December 2013].

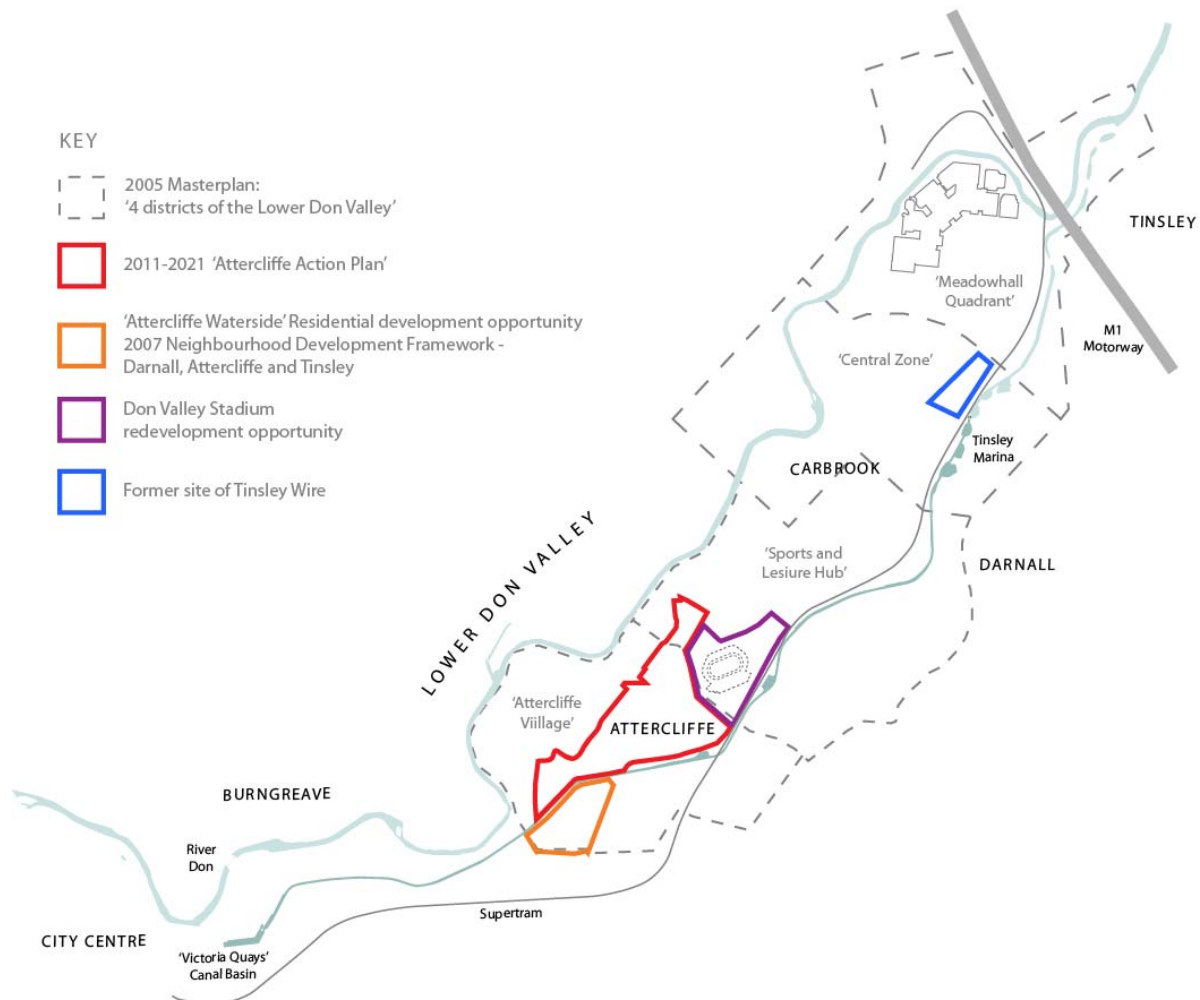


Figure 8.8. Plan of the Lower Don Valley summarising recent Sheffield City Council regeneration proposals.

Image: collated by author from recent SCC masterplan documents.

### 8.2.4 Summary

The limited progress of recent regeneration plans along the canal creates a confusing picture - considerable political, charitable, and voluntary efforts have reaped significant environmental improvements to the waterways, but the area is still desperately struggling to recover from the seismic economic shifts of the 70s and 80s, as well as a number of poorly conceived planning policies.<sup>30</sup> The economic promise offered by the regenerated Victoria Quays and promised waterfront developments still appear to be some way off. At the same time, the experience of walking along the canal still feels like the discovery of secret space in the city. This sense of a semi-forgotten, semi-abandoned cut in the landscape is punctuated by encounters with local fishermen, ramblers, and others who have escaped the remaining industrial activity of the East End or the tightly designated leisure and retail activity of Valley Centertainment and Meadowhall. Taking this

<sup>30</sup> Dabinett.

patched-up landscape as its context, the Port of Sheffield project sought to understand the human dimensions of this place – those perhaps currently overshadowed by the dominant narrative of de-industrialisation, demolition, and stalled regeneration.

### 8.3 CONCEPTION

#### 8.3.1 Identification of project partners and development of a framework for initiation

Having reflected upon the research design employed for the previous case studies in Hull and Liverpool, a revised methodological approach was adopted for the third case study. The proposed cooperative framework required the identification of a research partner to co-create a prototype site-specific performance and test the research questions in a collaborative context. The process of identifying and approaching this creative partner (s) was outlined in chapter 5, and is key to the success of this type of collaborative practice-led methodology. Within the confines of a doctoral research project this also felt like a somewhat risky research strategy. Not only did it represent an alternative approach to the first two case studies, but it required the identification of partner or group committed to the practice of site-specific performance practice and interested in the idea of developing a research collaboration. Sheffield was identified as the preferred location - due to its immediate accessibility, the significant number of sites of regeneration, and the researcher's existing knowledge of the urban context (as a student of architecture, professional practitioner, and resident in the city for over ten years). Despite this preference, in the early stages of identifying a collaborative practitioner it was also important not to rule out the possibility of working in other urban cities or sites that matched the profile of the research context.

Prior to the commencement of the Port of Sheffield project, it was anticipated that a collaborative partner might be identified and approached via one of the local theatre institutions (such as Sheffield Theatres) or through networking at public art/ performance festivals or symposia. In 2011, an early 'expert interview' with artistic director of Sheffield Theatres (Daniel Evans) highlighted the development of a programme of site-specific performance (known as 'Sheffield Unbound').<sup>31</sup> The concept behind Sheffield Unbound was the expansion of theatrical engagement to external 'non-theatre' audience and sites in Sheffield and the development of partnerships with other local theatre producers. There was an additional financial motivation behind the development of partnerships with external organisations, as these would enable Sheffield Theatres to bid for more ACE funding above the limits imposed by their 'National Portfolio Organisation' (NPO) status.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Research interview with Daniel Evans, Artistic Director of Sheffield Theatres, 2011.

<sup>32</sup> Evans.

Despite the potential that Sheffield Unbound offered as a way of finding potential research partners, the eventual identification came (somewhat surprisingly) as a result of a design competition organised by the national architectural institution the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA). As a professional body, RIBA have previously been characterised as deeply conservative - seeking to promote and protect a professional model of architectural practice as defined by the 'Plan of Work'.<sup>33</sup> However, in recent years the RIBA have introduced initiatives such as the '*Forgotten Spaces*' *ideas competition*, which aim to broaden the reach of the organisation beyond the realm of commercial/ professional practice. After previously being held in London, 'Forgotten Spaces' was brought to Sheffield in 2011, inviting entries from architects, designers, and artists to propose creative interventions to draw attention to underused or undervalued spaces in the city.<sup>34</sup> One of the 19 shortlisted entries was 'The Golden Frame' by Deborah Egan, Director of The Blue Shed Theatre. This entry proposed the installation of a large picture aboard a canal barge on the Sheffield and Tinsley Canal.

*"The barge would slowly drift along the canal – occasionally stopping allowing the watcher to look through the frame and consider a particular view... to get people, literally, to focus, reflect and then take ownership of a landscape by investing in – via their participation – a new or unusual way of viewing it."*<sup>35</sup>

The attention generated by the competition exhibition and a subsequent symposium presentation at Sheffield Hallam University provided the initial platform for discussion between the Blue Shed and RECITE.<sup>36</sup> Although the Golden Frame RIBA competition entry originally developed out of Egan's private practice, it was closely linked to a proposal for a site-specific performance entitled 'The Port of Sheffield' that she was also in the process of developing along the site of the Sheffield and Tinsley Canal. Coincidentally, preliminary discussions had already taken place between Egan and a producer (Andrew Loretto) from Sheffield Theatres as part of the same 'Sheffield Unbound' programme that had been discussed in the previous interview with Daniel Evans, creative director of Sheffield Theatres.

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<sup>33</sup> Till, 'Architecture Is Not Architecture Is Not Architecture Is Not Architecture'.

<sup>34</sup> Emma England, 'Introduction to Forgotten Spaces Sheffield', *Architect's Journal*, 8 September 2011 <<http://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/introduction-to-forgotten-spaces-sheffield/8619585.article>> [accessed 14 July 2014].

<sup>35</sup> Egan.

<sup>36</sup> Deborah Egan was invited to discuss her competition entry in a workshop (also attended by myself) at the Sheffield Hallam University Symposium 'City Futures: New Perspectives on Placemaking' in November 2011.

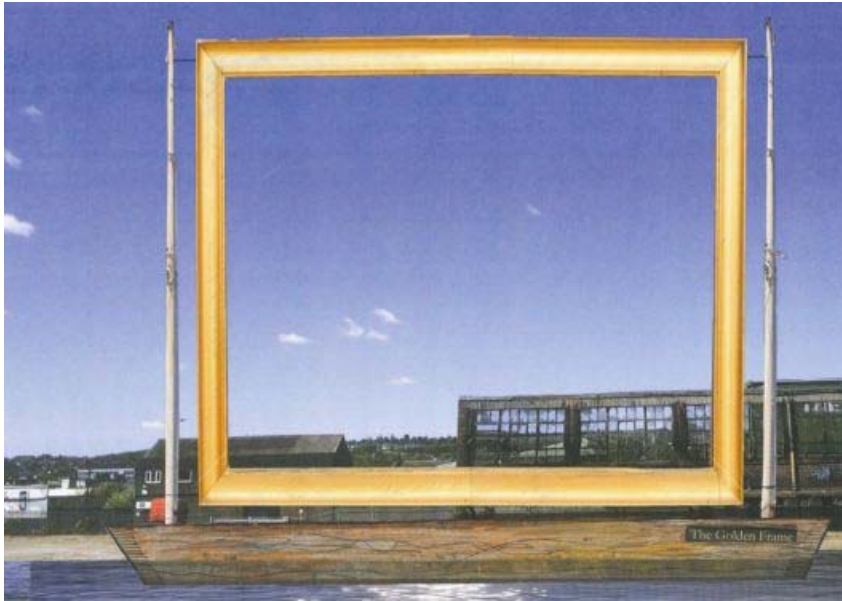


Figure 8.9. 'The Golden Frame' RIBA Forgotten Spaces Sheffield competition entry by Deborah Egan with Alistair Norton & Leon Henshaw.

Egan's keen interest in the site was as a result of her personal artistic practice of exploring and photographing forgotten and abandoned parts of the city. Alongside this, she was professionally involved in the area as director of the Blue Shed, a performance venue based in the Lower Don Valley. Having discussed the idea of a potential collaboration in November 2011, the first formal contact was made with the Blue Shed in early January 2012, where Egan set out her vision for 'The Port of Sheffield' - a 2-3 year partnership with Sheffield Theatres as part of 'Sheffield Unbound' framed around a series of participatory events (walks, performances, and installations) along the route of the Sheffield and Tinsley canal. These events were conceived as a way of generating wider awareness in the project, drawing together interested parties (local businesses, residents, and performers), and gathering a series of stories to generate a script. The intended culmination of this partnership was a large-scale site-specific performance planned for the summer of 2013 or 2014 (dependent on ACE and other funding bids).

### 8.3.2 The Blue Shed and the Port of Sheffield

The Blue Shed's approach to the Port of Sheffield collaboration is underpinned by a set of clearly articulated artistic, political, and social values. In order to build a collaborative platform that would function productively for both parties, it was vital to understand these values early on in the negotiation process. Egan's own practice involves two central stands - the formation and management of the Blue Shed (formerly The Brightside Project) and as an experienced practitioner in both the performing and visual arts. The Blue Shed operates as a venue and production house, hosting a range of arts and local community events as well as reaching beyond the physical

performance venue into communities across the north of the city - making work for a 'non-theatre' audiences across a range of art forms.<sup>37</sup> One of the main drivers behind work such as the Port of Sheffield is a concern over what Egan perceives to be an 'economic and an intellectual divide' in many formal theatrical environments. She argues that many people are either economically restricted or too intimidated to attend traditional theatre-based performance and, in her experience, this perceived feeling of intimidation stems from prevalence of performances (and themes) that people 'don't necessarily recognise or find meaningful within their lives'.<sup>38</sup> This has developed into an aspiration to take performance 'out of the building and into a more publicly-visible and accessible environments'.<sup>39</sup>

A desire to promote more accessible themes and spaces for performance is not the only motivation behind this work. Discussing the critical intentions of the 'Golden Frame' (the conceptual project that developed into the Port of Sheffield), Egan proposed this form of site-specific intervention as a way stimulating a new or unusual view of a familiar environment - one that encouraged participants to focus and reflect upon a changing landscape.<sup>40</sup> As well as conceiving work that (sometimes literally) reframes the urban landscape, Egan's practice is also concerned with rediscovering a narrative for forgotten or abandoned places. She cites the particular issues in Sheffield around the demolition of buildings (and the subsequent urban renewal) as events that have generated a particular 'sense of loss and lack of control in local communities'.<sup>41</sup> In drawing upon the memories and speculations of people who have lived a life on and around the Lower Don Valley, one of the ambitions for this form of artistic practice is to offer an alternative to the well-trodden narrative of the area around the Lower Don Valley as defined by poor planning decisions and economic failure. However, Egan also notes the tendency for local history projects to romanticise the recent (industrial) past, warning that this can lead to a 'commodification' of individual stories and experiences.

A third important aspect of Egan's practice is defined by the development of partnerships. This includes logistical partnerships with local institutions and businesses (such as Sheffield Theatres or the two universities), with funding institutions such as ACE alongside other practitioners, artists, and musicians from across the creative and digital sectors. The venue space of the Blue Shed was itself the product of an innovative partnership with local engineering and manufacturing firm Ekspan (the

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<sup>37</sup> Summary of the Blue Shed's production and performance work based on a description by Director Deborah Egan during initial discussions about the project. More details at <<http://www.theblueshed.co.uk>> [accessed 3 December 2013]

<sup>38</sup> Egan.

<sup>39</sup> Egan.

<sup>40</sup> Egan.

<sup>41</sup> Egan.

space was formerly a warehouse belonging to the company), and they continue to provide ongoing support to the venue. From the outset of my involvement in the project, there was a shared understanding of the Port of Sheffield as both a partnership and interdisciplinary enterprise - combining individual (discipline-specific) knowledge and skills from both performance and architecture (as well as the social history of the area). In addition, there was a mutual aspiration that the project would involve knowledge exchange between practice and research - Egan was keen that I became involved in the hand-on design and production of an event, while I encouraged input into the development of specific research questions (alongside the questions that had been shaped by the literature review and previous case studies).

### **8.3.3 Developing a collaboration**

Throughout the initial negotiation phase, Egan was keen to emphasise the nature of 'The Port of Sheffield' as a series of site-specific events or installations that would all form part of a programme of works leading up to a larger public performance. This approach was related to the process of generating interest and partnerships in preparation for a bid to ACE. From my point of view, the framework of this programme was an opportunity to develop a manageable project within existing structure and clear set of conceptual aims (around narrative, memory and place), while also developing a project of a sufficient scale and ambition to engage a large number of public participants. The negotiation phase was therefore led by considerations of what was achievable within the frameworks that had already been established. These included my PhD research timetable, the timing of a future bid to ACE, the likely limitations in terms of budget (especially in the short-term), as well as other time and work commitments. A concept emerged for a project that was mutually beneficial - addressing the goals of the RECITE research while also supporting the work of building a collection of stories for the longer-term Port of Sheffield project. It was agreed that a 'self-contained' performance or intervention could be developed for launch in late summer / autumn 2012. Although this arrangement was not backed by a formal written contract, a series of letters and conversations were exchanged following the initial meeting to develop an approximate timeframe and project scope, as well as reiterating a joint commitment to the project as a practice-led research collaboration.

This initial phase of negotiating the way in which a collaborative project might be designed, structured, and managed was also impacted by what Hasemore characterises as the 'an enthusiasm of practice'. This phrase describes the beginning of a practice-led research project, when practitioners may have established aspirations or possible start points for a project (such as a site or artistic concept). This is a period marked by conflicting feelings of excitement, possibility, disorder,

and a sense of the unknown.<sup>42</sup> Within the Port of Sheffield project, this enthusiasm was manifested by discussions of the types of intervention that might be appropriate for this site, questions around timescales, and ways of building upon the artistic concept already developed by Egan. An agreement was reached that an audio-walk model would best fit the requirements of the collaborative brief, which was based on the model of practice pioneered by performance-makers such as Janet Cardiff, Invisible Flock, and Graeme Miller.<sup>43</sup> While the model of performance has been widely applied and developed into numerous other formats, it was agreed that an audio-walk could be embedded in a specific site by drawing upon the stories and memories of local communities, and upon the particular social and political histories of the site.

Hasemore also describes a tendency for practitioners to ‘dive in’ to creative practice - making decisions and commencing practising to see what emerges – but, in doing so, invariably avoiding the ‘constraints’ of rigid methodological requirements or hypotheses.<sup>44</sup> Others may construct some form of initial framework or questions within which practice can develop. Within the Port of Sheffield team the design process was initiated using the following set of loose ‘research’ questions –which emerged out of discussions held during a series of early project meetings:

- Can the design and production of an audio-walk performance encourage people to walk the route of the canal for the first time?
- How might an audio-walk change existing perceptions of the canal and its environs? (e.g. engender a greater ‘sense of place’).
- How might participation in the audio-walk provoke participants to consider the future of the canal?
- What is the most appropriate platform or interface for encouraging public engagement with the audio-walk?

#### **8.3.4 Funding**

A practice-led collaboration is not only a way of bringing together different skillsets, but it can also increase the number of potential funding avenues for this type of self-initiated project. The University of Sheffield Festival of the Mind (FOTM) was predicated on the same principles of collaboration - developing partnerships between academic researchers and what the university termed the city’s ‘creative community’ (independent practitioners or cultural organisations) to

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<sup>42</sup> Haseman, pp. 100–101.

<sup>43</sup> This model is discussed in more detail in chapters 3 and 5, with specific examples catalogued in appendix 1.

<sup>44</sup> Haseman, pp. 100–101.



produce what they described as a series of ‘high impact knowledge exchange partnerships’<sup>45</sup>. The festival call sought projects across a number of themes (magic, space, identity, city and craft), with the brief requiring that all projects engaged the wider city with through a programme of free and open public events. Successful bids would be funded by the University (up to £5000), with the outcomes of these collaborations becoming a public showcase of cultural activity during the 10-day festival in September 2012. The FOTM initiative formed part of the University’s broader public engagement strategy - a policy that reflects a wider trend of increased public involvement or ‘participation’ within academic institutions. A full discussion of the issues associated with the rise of the public engagement agenda in British academia is not within the scope of this chapter, although recent studies by authors such as Watermeyer and Robsinson and Hudson provide a useful summaries of some of the key the issues, many of which echo the problematic nature of participation introduced in chapter 4.<sup>46</sup>

The jointly-authored proposal for Port of Sheffield was put forward on the basis that the project exemplified the collaborative principles of FOTM and would support the ongoing RECITE postgraduate research project. A single-stage competitive funding process was held, with the Port of Sheffield bid judged as successful and awarded funding of £5000 in March 2012. Access to institutional support and funding allocated through the FOTM programme was therefore founded on my position as a postgraduate researcher at the University of Sheffield.

Around the same time, the Blue Shed were also applying to the Arts Council England for a development budget for the proposed large-scale site-specific performance that was to follow up in 2014 from the audio-walk and other proposed project activities. This research and development funding bid (which was also successful) was targeted at carrying out initial feasibility and development study for two key areas of the - local community engagement and technical production along the canal. In early 2012 this was invested in employing a production consultant and two participation consultants to help make connections with potential partner organisations and to work through some of the logistical and production issues associated with staging a site-specific performance along the route of the canal.

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<sup>45</sup> The University of Sheffield, ‘The Festival of the Mind’, 2012  
<<http://festivalofthemind.group.shef.ac.uk/about>>.

<sup>46</sup> Richard Watermeyer, ‘Challenges for University Engagement in the UK: Towards a Public Academe?’, *Higher Education Quarterly*, 65 (2011), 386–410 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2273.2011.00492.x>>; Fred Robinson and Ray Hudson, ‘Can Universities Really Effectively Engage with Socially Excluded Communities?’, in *University Engagement With Socially Excluded Communities*, ed. by Paul Benneworth (Springer Netherlands, 2013), pp. 189–98 <[http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-94-007-4875-0\\_10](http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-94-007-4875-0_10)> [accessed 8 January 2014].

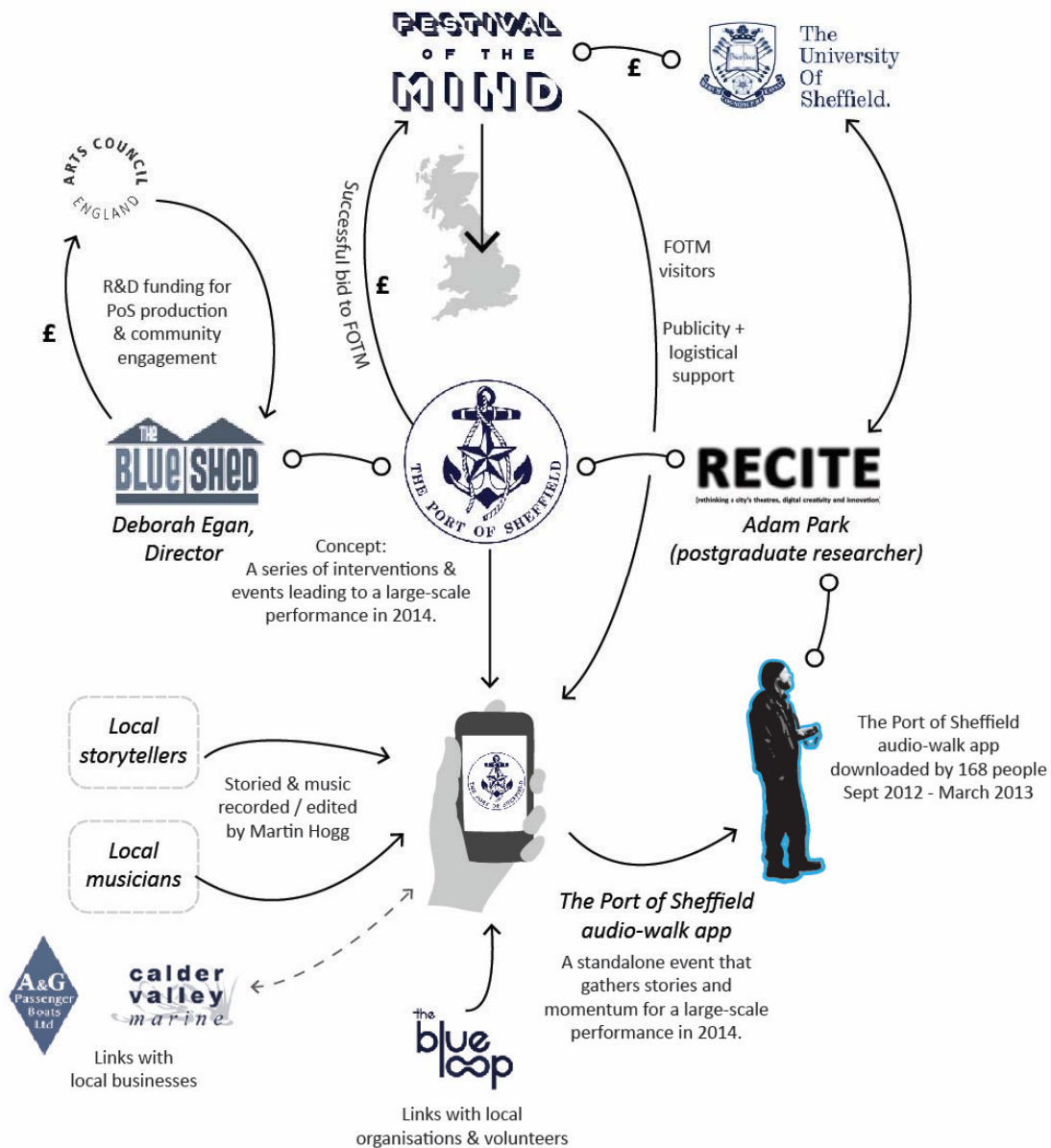


Figure 8.10. PoS stakeholder and funding map.

The award of FOTM and ACE funding created a set of 'real' deadlines and deliverables that helped to give the project momentum. It also became clear that the proposed FOTM budget would be stretched in order to produce the audio-walk content and interface, meaning that the two core project members were working on the project unpaid (although I was supported by the PhD research grant). The budget did, however, allow for the recruitment of other technicians such as the sound recordist (Martin Hogg) on a freelance basis. The ethical issues around levels of financial reward, voluntary effort, and recruitment of freelance technicians are all part of a much wider

ongoing debate around the true costs of performance-making, particularly within small-scale companies making site-specific and experimental work.<sup>47</sup> While a limited number of more established companies (such as Slung Low or Forced Entertainment) might be supported financially by the ACE 'National Portfolio Organisation' (NPO) status, independent artists and performance-makers are often reliant on irregular funding streams such as festival commissions, or ACE development funding, with others supporting their practice through supplementary part-time employment or the goodwill of others. The Blue Shed are one example of arts organisation supported by voluntary effort while at the same time outwardly maintaining a professional profile that, to a certain extent, masks their precarious financial arrangements. This situation is reflected in some of the innovative partnerships developed by Egan to finance and manage the Blue Shed, including the backing of Ekspan.

## 8.4 PRODUCTION

### 8.4.1 Design process

Following the negotiation phase and successful bid for FOTM funding, the project was progressed through regular team meetings held at the Blue Shed or on site at Victoria Quays. These meetings reflected the cyclical nature of the design process, where the project constraints and opportunities were identified (such as the interface for interacting with the audio content), and suggestions were put forward and tested. This was generally followed by a joint reflection on the success (or failure) of previous ideas before taking them forward to progress to the next phase or revisiting the constraints and opportunities to try out alternatives. Within this (somewhat generic) depiction of the initial design process, three distinct threads of design activity emerged as specific to the development of the audio-walk:

- **Gathering** - identifying, meeting and working with a range of local participants to research the history of the canal and gather a combination of stories, memories, and provocations. To be followed by a process of recording, editing and curating the original audio contributions.
- **Spatial negotiation** - designing the extent of the walking route and mapping the narrative and musical audio content onto a series of listening points (physical locations). Designing,

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<sup>47</sup> Amongst a recent flurry of opinion pieces and editorials and blog posts on the issue of the funding of site-specific performance, the following three texts are particularly relevant: Alan Lane, 'Transparency, Money and Being the Theatre Company We Want to Be', *alanlaneblog*, 2013 <<http://alanlaneblog.wordpress.com/2013/11/28/blog-post-transparency-money-and-being-the-theatre-company-we-want-to-be/>> [accessed 8 March 2014]; Hannah Nicklin, 'Towards Hope, New Conversations, Carrying On.', 2013 <<http://www.hannahnicklin.com/tag/funding/>> [accessed 8 March 2014]; Bryony Kimmings 'You show me yours...' <<http://thebryonykimmings.tumblr.com/post/67660917680/you-show-me-yours>> [accessed 8 March 2014].

coding and testing a simple interface that enables participants to access the audio content via a mobile Smartphone.

- **Design and production of the launch event** - for the launch of the audio-walk at the Festival of the Mind (FOTM), activities included the production of online and printed publicity, the completion of a risk assessment, production of help and guidance documentation for participants, and the arrangement of a physical 'launch point' for the walk. A later stage of redesigning and reorganising the supporting information was required following the FOTM, as after this point the audio-walk became self-directed and accessed principally through the project website.

It was important that first two of these threads ('gathering' and 'spatial negotiation') were progressed in tandem, with each informing and shaping the other. The nature of these threads resulted in emergence of specific project roles - these began to emerge instinctively as individual skillsets became more apparent. I became primarily involved in the spatial / interface design and editing processes, with Egan leading the process of gathering stories (alongside sound recordist Martin Hogg) as well as overseeing the artistic direction of the project.

The Port of Sheffield		2012										2013				
Digital Trail		Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
Concept Outline/application																
Grant confirmation ( Festival of the Mind)																
R and D Technical delivery																
Website infrastructure , design , live																
R And D Content																
Content AcruaI , documenting , transcription																
Beta Technical Delivery - virtual /lo fi																
Technical Delivery -Installation , testing - final																
Physical product design map/purchase																
Create physical workbase																
In situ /LIVE																
Review																

Figure 8.11. *The Port of Sheffield audio-walk* - proposed delivery programme. Image: Deborah Egan / Phil Green (Scenograf).

#### 8.4.2 Gathering (participation)



Figure 8.12. 'Port of Sheffield' business cards were produced to recruit local storytellers. Image: author.

The public launch of the audio-walk at the FOTM in September 2012 represented the culmination of a long-term process of engaging with local residents, voluntary groups, businesses and other recreational users along the Sheffield-Tinsley Canal site. The process of gathering the stories and memories of these communities became the main focus of the project in the six months prior to the launch, with a number of engagement events held with the different groups that became involved in the project. The process of identifying and recruiting storytellers was led by Egan along with Martin Hogg. Links were initially established through existing contacts from the area, with local voluntary groups such as the Blue Loop providing access to a larger number of local volunteers through their weekly activities along the canal. Local business owners and canal residents were approached at Victoria Quays through informal conversations and, where required, more formal written requests providing additional information about the aims and methods of the project. At the same time, wider appeals to the Sheffield public were made via an active presence on social media (Twitter) alongside more traditional broadcasting media (local BBC radio and the local press).

This process gradually uncovered a number of local people willing to share their stories - representing the life of canal and the role it has played (or still plays) within many individual narratives of the city. The amount of time invested in this process was particularly significant. Engagement with potential storytellers happened over a number of weeks and months, as it was important to build a level of trust and dialogue with some of the individuals involved before they decided whether to donate their personal story. Many stories only emerged after two or three meetings with an individual. Developing a strong relationship with local businesses became particularly significant to the project, with the owners of both the marina and local café offering

generous in-kind support through the loan of a canal boat and spaces for events respectively. The gathering process therefore became not just as means to acquiring material for the performance but also as a way of developing a deeper understanding and connection to the site, including its social and economic dimensions.

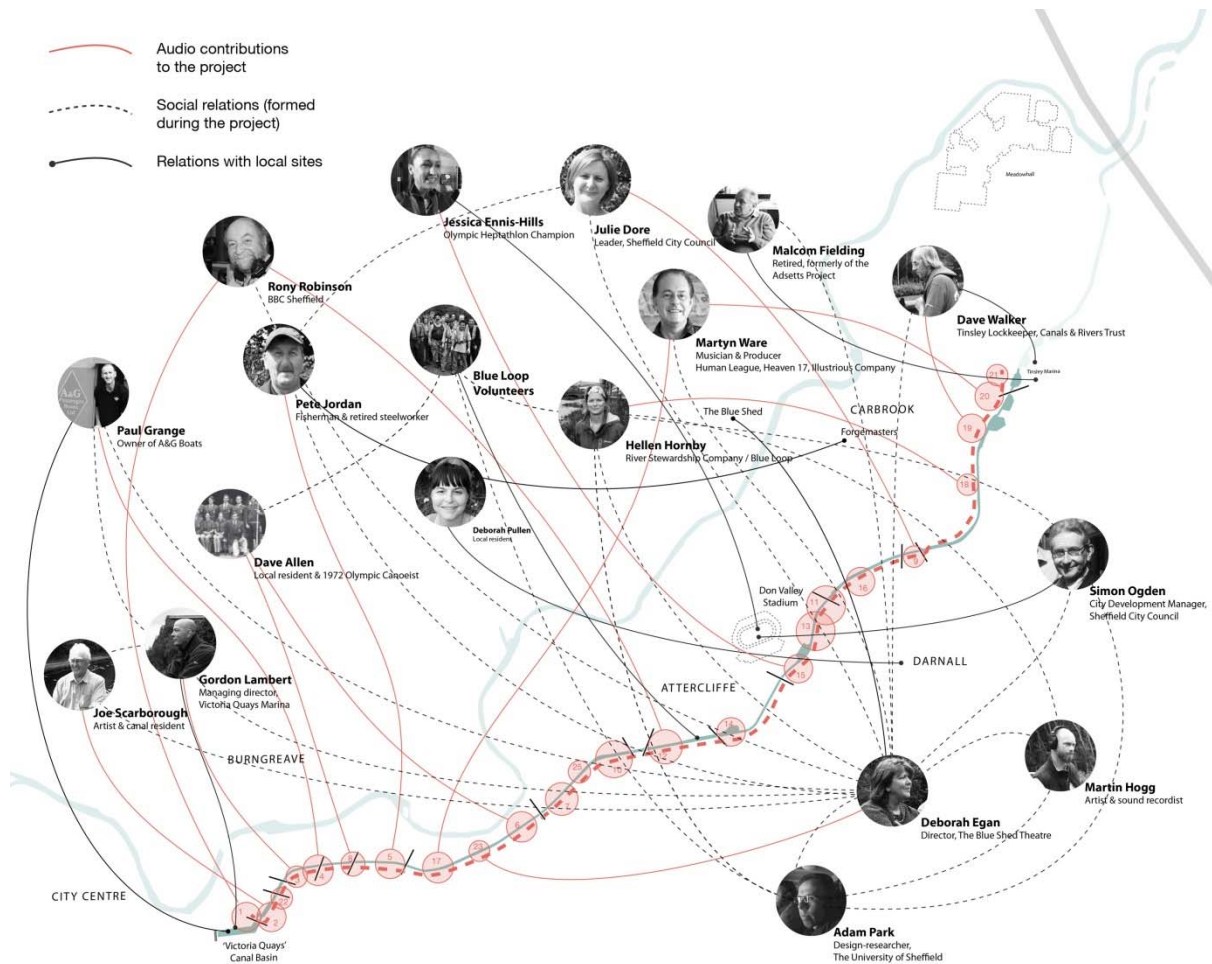


Figure 8.13. *The Port of Sheffield audio-walk* - contributors and relations. Image: author.

The majority the recording activity took place on the site itself - aboard a canal boat serving as a recording studio or whilst walking with storytellers along the towpath. These events, typically held on Saturdays throughout the summer, became 'performative' gestures in themselves, with the event and site becoming a 'prop' for conversations and enabling other unexpected stories to emerge. Measures were put in place to ensure that stories were gathered and recorded in an ethically responsible manner. Contributors were provided with information about the public performance and research project, and asked to provide informed consent before submitting stories. By inviting storytellers to join one of the boat trips along the canal, the project team were able to offer a small reward for their personal investment in the project. In addition, all storytellers were invited to the



opening event for the audio-walk (held at Victoria Quays) and provided with a copy of the final edited version of the Port of Sheffield audio collection.



Figure 8.14. The performance-maker (Egan) with two of the storytellers during a Port of Sheffield recording session. Image: Author.

### 8.4.3 Spatial negotiation

Alongside the progression of recruiting storytellers and gathering/ recording their stories, members of the team were also involved in the design of the interface between audio content and participants – looking at how to embed audio content within the physical site. This was informed by the ongoing RECITE review of existing audio-walk practices.

A number of alternative approaches to the design of an audio-walk have been encountered during the process of undertaking this research. Each of these approaches is influenced in some way by a design choice (or compromise) between different technological and user interfaces - balancing factors such as cost and accessibility, alongside the desired 'aesthetic' experience. Previous examples of site-specific practice have involved the installation of speakers in the site itself (e.g. LINKED), loaned specialist GPS audio equipment to a limited number of participants (e.g. Mapping Footprints), or used pre-downloaded digital audio content in tandem with a map - instructing

participants 'when to press play' (e.g. Ports of Call).<sup>48</sup> In recent years, performance-makers have increasingly turned towards location-based (or 'locative') media, a reflection of the dramatic growth in ownership of Smartphones. As discussed in chapter 3, the online connectivity (3G / 4G) and location-sensing capability (GPS) of the average consumer Smartphone has opened up a number of new possibilities for designers of location-based applications. The process of developing one-off Smartphone applications (apps) has become much more straightforward using a number of free and open-source online frameworks (see Figure 8.15). Location-based media is of particular interest to the designers and makers of audio-walks and other similar forms of performance. By carrying a Smartphone (with the relevant mobile app loaded and active), the participant's body within the site becomes a trigger. As participants walk through the site, the app constantly monitor their progress and updates their location - checking it against the location data attached to the audio content stored online. If the participant approaches the location of a story (e.g. is less than 50m away), a match is made and a specific piece of audio content is downloaded to their Smartphone and played by the app. This enables stories specific to sites to be played in-situ without the need for participants to refer to a cartographic map.

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<sup>48</sup> Graeme Miller, *Linked: A Landmark in Sound, an Invisible Artwork, a Walk*, ongoing 2003 <[www.linkedm11.net/](http://www.linkedm11.net/)> [accessed 4 April 2013]; Francesca Veronesi and Petra Gemeinboeck, 'Mapping Footprints A Sonic Walkthrough of Landscapes and Cultures', *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, 15 (2009), 359–69; University of East London and Toby Butler, *Ports of Call*, ongoing 2008.



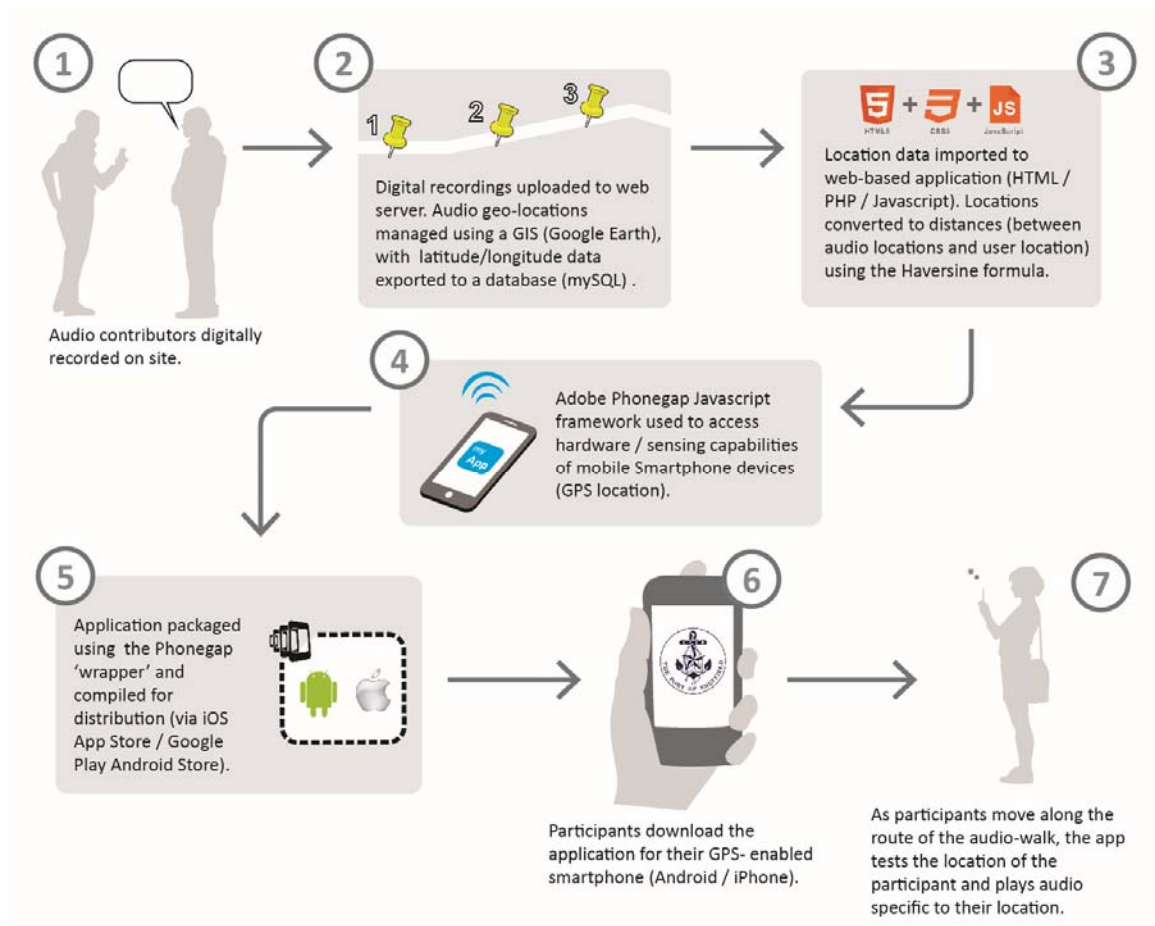


Figure 8.15. Digital frameworks used to produce *the Port of Sheffield audio-walk*. Further details of the app (including extracts of the HTML/Javascript codebase) can be found in Appendix 4. Image: Author.

Despite the opportunities offered by this form of technology, critics have also exposed some of the technical limitations and inherent conflicts raised when using location-based media in the context of site-specific performance practice.<sup>49</sup> Central to the early discussions within the Port of Sheffield team was the potential for the use (or reliance) on Smartphone technology to exclude a range of potential participants. This was not just in terms of the monetary costs of owning and running a Smartphone, but the broader questions of accessibility and the exclusion of many different groups. These questions felt particularly pertinent during the design of *the Port of Sheffield audio-walk*, as at the time the story-gathering process was taking place with local residents and others users of the canal, many of whom were older people with relatively limited experience of this form of technology. The disadvantages of a location-based media approach were therefore weighed up

<sup>49</sup> B. Bedwell and others, 'In Support of City Exploration', in *Proceedings of the 27th international conference on Human factors in computing systems*, 2009, pp. 1171–80 (p. 1172); Veronesi and Gemeinboeck, p. 368; Nikoleta Yiannoutsou and Nikolaos Avouris, 'Reflections on Use of Location-Based Playful Narratives for Learning' (presented at the IADIS International Conference on Mobile Learning, Porto, 2010), p. 4; McGarrigle, 'The Construction of Locative Situations: The Production of Agency in Locative Media Art Practice'.

against the costs and inherent drawbacks associated with the alternative approaches. This led to the adoption of a compromise strategy, whereby the audio-walk was designed based on location-based/ Smartphone technology alongside the provision of 'lower-tech' alternatives (digital audio and printed maps) as well as the possibility of borrowing a Smartphone as part of the monthly guided walks.

Alongside the barriers associated with accessing these technologies, wider concerns have been raised around the use of location-based media in art and performance practice as potentially distracting from a highly contextual or sensitive approach to place.<sup>50</sup> This highlights an intrinsic conceptual conflict within the creation of site-specific performance supported by GPS technology, particularly in the context of the arguments developed in chapter 3 (around the criticality of 'mapping-by-performing' and its rejection of Cartesian conceptions of space).<sup>51</sup> Other authors have argued that personal audio devices and Smartphones can act as a barrier or 'territory machine' - creating personal space for the user at the expense of other interactions (with people or places).<sup>52</sup> However in his audio-walk performances ('Memoryscapes'), Butler proposes that this disconnected state of listening through headphones is coupled with an increased interaction with the participant's immediate environment that is prompted by site-specific and engaging audio content.<sup>53</sup> Public sites of performance are also likely to be shared with other users who have no prior knowledge that a performance is taking place. Butler goes on to note how audio-walks encourage participants to slow down, stop and look carefully at their environment, interrupting the 'nomadic' individual journey and resulting in meaningful interactions with other people, "if the listener is open to the possibility".<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Flanagan, p. 216.

<sup>51</sup> Gemeinboeck and Saunders, p. 163. See also Chapter 3.

<sup>52</sup> Shepard, p. 24; Sophie Arkette, 'Sounds like City', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 21 (2004), 159 (p. 165).

<sup>53</sup> Toby Butler, 'A Walk of Art', p. 898.

<sup>54</sup> Toby Butler, 'A Walk of Art', p. 898.



Figure 8.16. Screenshot of the PoS iOS app graphical user interface (GUI). Image: Author.

In designing an experience that enables participants to interact ‘with and within’ the site, the designers and producers of location-based performances face a difficult balance - making use of the capabilities of location-sensing technologies while overcoming the potential ‘cocooning’ effects of the technology. This balance is often addressed by designing and producing custom software applications and ‘practice-based interfaces’ - performative re-interpretations of technology that emphasise certain aspects while constraining others.<sup>55</sup> Custom applications can be used to incorporate additional features into the graphical user interface (GUI), such as interactive maps to aid participants to navigate complex and potentially unknown urban settings. The first iterations of the PoS GUI were kept deliberately minimal - a design decision made to prioritise auditory engagement and to encourage the participant to keep their mobile device out of sight (see Figure 8.16). This effectively limited the ‘practice-based interface’ to a pair of headphones, the auditory instructions and the participant’s own ‘sensorial decision making’ - leaving participants to ‘survey’ the landscape through the audio narratives and intuition alone.<sup>56</sup> Further details of the technical design and production of the mobile app are documented in appendix 4.

<sup>55</sup> McGarrigle, ‘The Construction of Locative Situations: The Production of Agency in Locative Media Art Practice’, pp. 75, 101.

<sup>56</sup> Veronesi and Gemeinboeck, p. 164.

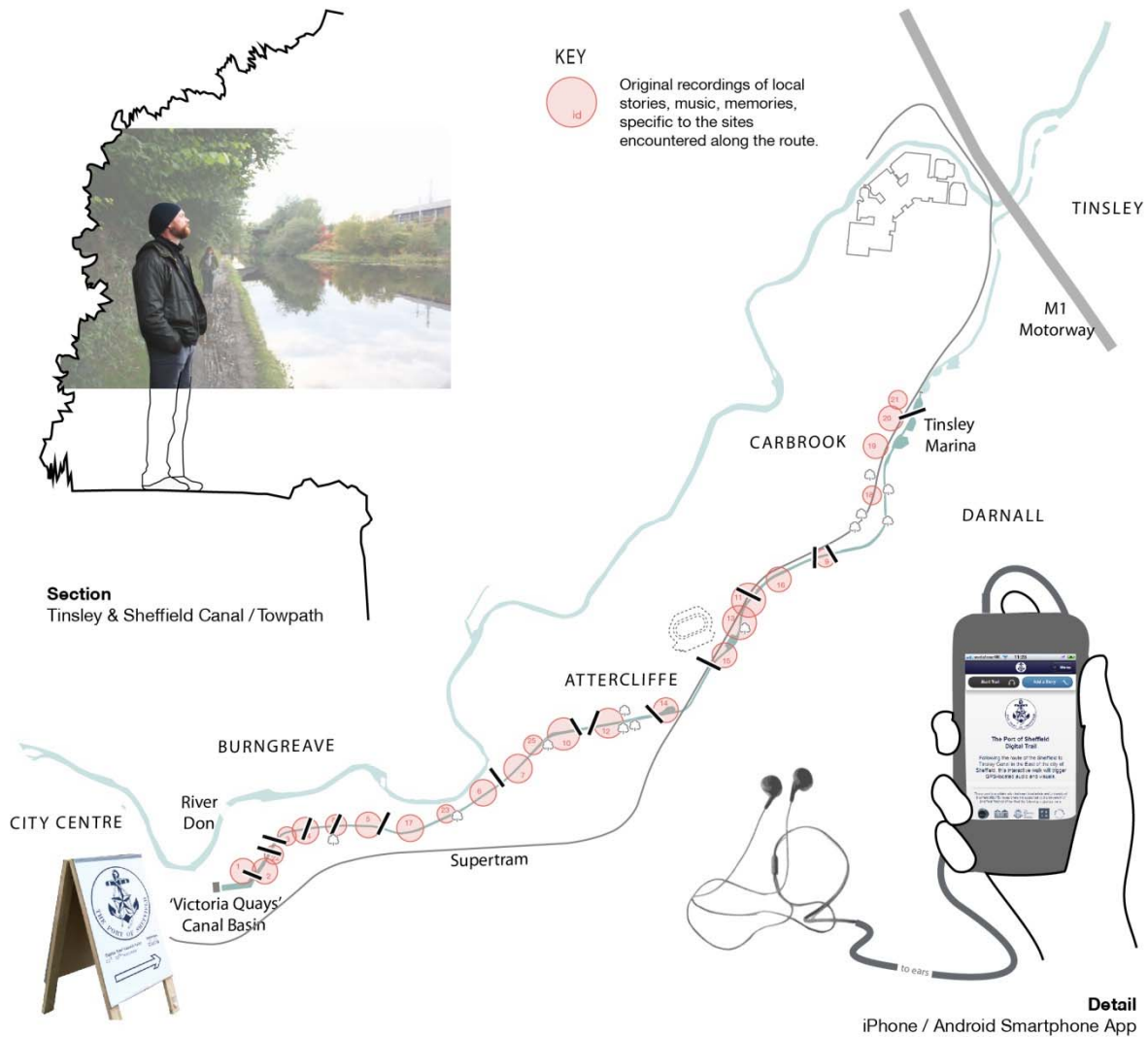


Figure 8.17. *The Port of Sheffield* audio-walk structure. Image: Author.

As figure 8.17 illustrates, site for *The Port of Sheffield* audio-walk follows a three-mile stretch of canal, beginning at the Victoria Quays canal basin and following the route of the towpath as far as the lower locks at Tinsley Marina. This endpoint is not just a function of a reasonable walking distance, but also links the route up to the Supertram network, enabling participants to make the return journey to the city centre using the tram. Despite the linear nature of the site, the use of location-based technology enables the design and production of a walk that is distinctly non-prescriptive and requires relatively little in the way of signage or instructions. Participants are able to start at any time of their choosing, walk the route at a pace that suits them, and can start, stop, or repeat the route as they please. Despite the freedom that this offers to participants, the self-directed nature of the audio-walk does open up the potential for participants to face technical difficulties. As both public event that formed part of the FOTM programme, it was vital to minimise (or mitigate) any potential technical issues and offer additional support to participants. This included

setting up a staffed 'launch point' during the festival, signposting the start point of the walk, rigorous testing of the mobile interface (application) to solve and technical bugs, and providing a set of clear (jargon-free) instructions on the project website.



Figure 8.18. The Port of Sheffield design process used physical maps as a method of structuring the audio-walk content while iteratively testing and tweaking the locations within the site. Image: Author.

As well as developing a working mobile app, the audio-walk model required a significant input at an artistic, curatorial or editorial decision-making level - mixing the palette of audio contributions (music, spoken, anecdotal memories) and linking these to specific locations along the route. This 'choreography' of the listening experience was carried out through cycles of recording, editing, geo-tagging, and in-situ testing. Often underreported in other similar studies, this testing process (which involved repeatedly walking up and down the canal testing the sequencing, timing and tone of the audio content) was, in itself, a reiterative 'performance' of the site. This testing of the relationship between technology, media and location is distinctive in the way that it requires a regular presence on the site, and this then sparked new encounters, conversations, and suggestions of other contributors who may want to become involved in the project.

## 8.5 PERFORMANCE

### 8.5.1 First-hand account

Unlike the previous two case studies, the following account of *The Port of Sheffield audio-walk* is written from the perspective of (co)creator and (co)researcher. This personal account is therefore not intended to reflect the experience of participants, but to convey a sense of how the various stories were curated and the various experiences of the canal site (of the storytellers and Port of



Sheffield team) were translated into a structure for the audio-walk. These reflections are based on both my experience both during the FOTM (the launch of the audio-walk) and the subsequent monthly guided walks. The documentary photographs used to illustrate this section are all taken by the author.

### THE PORT OF SHEFFIELD



*We sit somewhat nervously aboard our borrowed narrow boat 'Lena' in the Sheffield canal basin, hoping that people will respond to the various publicity streams that the Festival of the Mind have been promoting. The boat is acting as the launch point for the audio-walk – and provides a space to invite potential participants on board to issue them with headphones, set up the Port of Sheffield app on their Smartphone, and help to explain how the audio-walk works. As the weekend progresses, a steady trickle of participants have found their way down to the Quays, each with a markedly different set of expectations of what they are about to undertake. While some have obviously experienced similar walks in other cities, others only grasp the concept once it has been explained in a couple of different ways! At first, a number of people also struggle with the technology and the instructions they are provided – not helped by the fact that the nearby café (where participants can get on the WIFI to download the app or audio files) is much further away from our boat that we thought it would be. Despite these difficulties, the majority of participants seem to manage to get it working. A couple whose phone doesn't support the app version promise to come back later with their mp3 players, and in lulls between groups or individuals arriving, I hurriedly update the instructions on the Port of Sheffield website to address some of the issues we have been having.*



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*Upon pressing a prominent button marked 'start the trail', the first thing participants hear is the introduction to the performance:*

*"The Port of Sheffield audio collection is made up of original contributions - eclectic, famous, and not-so-famous - ranging from an Olympian to a local water bailiff. Some voices are scripted, many are spontaneous. They describe events and evoked moments as well as historical fact".<sup>57</sup>*

*As people set off, seemingly gripped by the introductory instructions, there is little time to issue any further instructions and as they cross the basin and join the towpath, only the app and their phone will be keeping track of their progress.*

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<sup>57</sup> Introduction to the PoS audio-walk - scripted by Deborah Egan.



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*At irregular and unpredictable intervals along the towpath, the progress of the participant triggers the next story. As the app buzzes and comes to life, some participants pause and stand still to listen and look. Others maintain their stride, perhaps just pausing to check their phone and to read the short description of the storyteller on the screen. Whether it is a story, piece of music or interview with a local celebrity, each recording is connected to the immediate locality of the listener. This connection is sometimes reinforced through a visual reference in the narrative – perhaps to an approaching bridge or one of the buildings on the opposite bank - a curious mix of warehouses, derelict works, and scrapyards. Other stories are more evocative in content, requiring the listener to imagine how the memories or past events might have been embodied within the site.*





*As participants progress through the densely developed industrial area they encounter a diverse mix of voices and stories. One, belonging to the film producer Duncan Wheeler, recalls the opening scene of the well-known British film 'The Full Monty' and the almost comical difficulties that the production team had in filming along this stretch of the canal. A local canoeist describes his preparation for the 1972 Munich Olympics and his training runs up and down this stretch of what was then 'yellow slime'. A former steelworker remembers the night over 20 years ago when he dived into the canal to rescue a man who was drowning. All of these events were separated in time but occurred within a few hundred metres of each other. The spatial proximity of events and the participant's body are brought together through the processes of retelling and listening, momentarily eroding the temporal separation between past actions and present-day experience.*




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*As the canal exits a deep cut in the landscape, a more legible section of the towpath opens up with views across to the back of Attercliffe and, to the other side, glimpses of the Darnall area of the city. Once amongst the most densely populated urban areas in Europe, the back-to-back terraced housing that housed thousands of Sheffield's workers has all but disappeared. Where the dense greenery briefly subsides, participants can able to catch glimpses of the present-day landscape - one dominated by light industrial warehouses and dormant works buildings.*




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*On the opposite bank, the towpath passes directly behind the site of the Don Valley Stadium. A small mooring area sits empty, apparently dis-used since it was created at the same time as the athletics track for the World Student Games. The stadium is also empty awaiting demolition despite its recent publicity as the home training ground of local hero Jessica Ennis, the subject of the next story triggered by the app. However, any further contemplation of the legacy of her success in 2012 is quickly interrupted by another woman's voice through participants' headphones:*

*"From 11 years old, this is where we used to play – this was our playground basically.*

*Obviously Mums and Dads did not know that because we would have been hung!*

*We used to swim. We used to build dens on the side.*

*There used to massive factories all the way along here, spewing rubbish into this place – but they were building all sorts of steelworks.*

*So you used to be able to ask them for things that you were building your dens with.*

*We were their slaves, obviously. They would shout out of the window "go and fetch us a beer".*

*And you could take the bottle back so that you had a penny, so by the end of the day you might be rich and have a pound!*

*And when you used to go home, your Mum would say "where have you been!"*

*The only reason she would know that you had been around here was the smell on your clothes – that you’d been diving in and out of canals.”<sup>58</sup>*

*This poignant recollection of a childhood spent playing in and around the canal is reflected in thoughts of Julie Dore, the leader of Sheffield City Council. Her contribution to the audio-walk presents an optimistic future vision for the canal, one where the canal is rediscovered and celebrated as a green idyll – somewhere to play, fish, walk, and escape to (although swimming is not encouraged!).*




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*As the route progresses away from the remaining industrial sheds, car parks, and Tex Mex restaurants of ‘Valley Centertainment’, dense woodland springs up on either side of the canal, hiding the city once more. In this final stretch, the stories thin out, echoing the more peaceful and pastoral nature of the surrounding. Participants hear stories of the work of environmental groups to clear up the canal and support the resurgence of species including kingfishers and pipistrelle bats.*

*Those who have made it this far are greeted to Carbrook by the industrial sound archive of Martyn Ware, whose recordings of the heavy drop forges punctuate the dramatic view. Looking across at the lights of Meadowhall, the culmination of the walk brings the incredible change in the Valley into focus. With what was once the vast factory of Tinsley Wire stretching out in the foreground, participants are reminded that cities are not only a product of demolition and regeneration, but are constantly in a process of being shaped and reshaped by our personal stories and experiences.*

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<sup>58</sup> Transcribed excerpt from the PoS audio-walk story ‘Childhood’ by Deborah Pullen.



### 8.5.2 Data collection

In the six months from its public launch in late September 2012 to April 2013, *The Port of Sheffield audio-walk* app was downloaded 168 times (see Table 8.1). When launched on the participant's Smartphone, the app prompted users to complete a short registration form, which involves the submission of contact details, some brief information on demographics, health and safety information, and the provision of consent as part of the University research ethics procedure. At this stage, participants were also able to opt-out of the research aspects of the project but still take part in the audio-walk.<sup>59</sup> Upon completion of the walk, all registered participants were sent a link to the RECITE questionnaire, which presented a series of questions about their experience of the performance (see Table 8.2).

	Total downloads (Sept 2012-April 2013)
Android App (Google Play Store)	72
iPhone App (App Store)	96
Audio-walk guidebook/map (PoS website)	302

Table 8.1. Port of Sheffield mobile app downloads.

<sup>59</sup> Apple iPhone app guidelines also require an opt-out for user registration.

	Total downloads (Sept 2012-April 2013)
Total App Downloads	168
RECITE Registrations	46 (27%)
Questionnaire Responses	20 (12%)

Table 8.2. RECITE questionnaire respondents.

In addition to the online responses, participant observation and short structured interviews were carried out during a monthly series of Port of Sheffield 'guided' walks. The guided walks, which were carried out between October 2012 and March 2013, were promoted online and via social media but were also an opportunity to invite back storytellers, contributors, and others interested in the project. The guided walks also enabled the researchers to gain important first-hand insights and feedback from the interactions with the Smartphone and audio-walk app, the audio content, and the site itself.

## 8.6 REFLECTION/ EVALUATION

The positioning of the researcher and performance-maker as co-producers of the performance has made the analysis of this case study and participant feedback particularly challenging. This is primarily due to the difficulties of separating the analysis of the performance (as a public event) from the collaborative practice that created it. Further complexity is added by attempting to report on the joint process of reflecting on the project (within the constraints of an individual thesis). This process was carried out during a joint reflection and analysis session with Deborah Egan, held in summer 2013. This was later recorded and transcribed. It has subsequently been edited and formatted for the purposes of this case study write-up.

### 8.6.1 Analysis

This analysis section is divided into two sections. The first deals with qualitative analysis of the performance itself, examining participant responses to the feedback questionnaire alongside observations and reflections on the performance from the co-creators (Deborah Egan and myself). The second section of the case study analysis reflects on the process of collaboratively designing and producing the audio-walk. This analysis draws upon field notes and, observations, and written records of the design and production meetings that were held at regular intervals during the project.

### 8.6.2 Participant Feedback

Before addressing the broader themes that emerged from the open-ended qualitative responses to the audio-walk, the analysis of the project began by examining the responses from the opening

section of the questionnaire. This began by asking respondents a series of closed questions - how well they knew the site, how long the walk had taken, where they had travelled from to participate (first part of their postcode only), and how they had found out about the event. The methodological priorities of this study (and small sample size) meant that no meaningful quantitative analysis of this data has been attempted, although these questions were beneficial in terms of checking whether how much of the route respondents had completed as well as informing future marketing of the audio-walk.

The first section of the questionnaire also gave respondents an opportunity to describe any difficulties or technical issues experienced during the audio-walk. One of the unforeseen technical issues that was highlighted by a number of respondents was the reliance of the app on both GPS and 3G mobile data network coverage. During the development phase of the project, our on-site testing process had indicated that this connectivity would not present a significant issue for participants. However, feedback from several respondents highlighted problems with signal failure. Other issues included issues with battery life (the combination of GPS and audio playback required significant use of the battery) or other technical difficulties with the app (e.g. intermittent 'crashing') at some point along the route.

For several participants, the intermittent quality of GPS/3G signal was reported as interfering with the location at which stories were played. Although these errors may have resulted in confusion or frustration for participants on the ground, they do act as a useful reminder that 'location-aware' technologies are still reliant on a number of successful material and virtual connections being made (user-device-GPS satellites-device-internet-database-playback-user), and can therefore only ever serve as a 'surrogate' way of knowing, performing, and communicating knowledge.<sup>60</sup>

### 8.6.3 Open-ended questions

The main body of the questionnaire asked participants to reflect on their experience of the walk using a series of prompts. The breadth of the 20 responses analysed suggests the format of the audio-walk as allowing space for multiple readings and interpretations. Furthermore, the level of detail contained in the online responses indicates that respondents did not necessarily find the questionnaire format as difficult to engage with as may have been initially feared.

This section opened by asking respondents to recall the **most memorable story** from their experience of the audio-walk. This question served as way of encouraging respondents to return to the experience of the walk, as well as easing them into the more-ended questions that would follow.

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<sup>60</sup> Veronesi and Gemeinboeck, p. 368.

The stories that provoked the most enthusiastic responses included the anecdote by a former steelworker who saved the drowning man and the storyteller who described her childhood playing in along the canal and swimming in the polluted water.

This next question asked respondents **to describe their experience of undertaking the audio-walk**.

The experience also had the effect of slowing people down and ‘opening their eyes’ to their surroundings. There were mixed reports about the way that the audio shut out surrounding people and sound – some enjoyed the way that it actually sparked conversations. One participant’s remarks stood out in this respect - commenting that the experience of the walk was like *“being joined by a friend who accompanies you for a while and then drifts off before somebody else joins you again”*<sup>61</sup>. The feeling of having ‘met’ other people (despite knowing that the audio was pre-recorded) indicates that, for some, the walk created what Farman describes as a ‘distinct sense of embodied space’.<sup>62</sup>

Existing research has highlighted that way in which embedded location-based content can enrich, ‘energise’, or ‘heighten’ the connection between participant and the site of the interaction.<sup>63</sup> A number of responses touched upon the idea that the experience of the walk made the site ‘come alive’, both in terms of its past history and current use.<sup>64</sup> For those who had previously walked the route of the canal, a common response was that the experience mixed familiar histories (the industrial past) with new stories. Finally, a number of respondents discussed how the experience changed their view of the canal and its potential - *“we see the canal more integral to the city, rather than something hidden”,* and *“this has been a good way to bring them (the waterways) back to life, and discuss their future use”*.<sup>65</sup>

For others, the PoS performance was their first experience of the canal and this part of the city. As might have been expected, discovering a new place was associated with a sense of curiosity and excitement. However, a number of responses indicated that the experience went beyond the simple pleasure of walking somewhere for the first time. This was described by one respondent as a feeling of *“familiarity with a completely new and unknown place”*.<sup>66</sup> Other responses indicate that a sense of excitement is linked to the unexpected discovery of a ‘new’ place within a city that they had lived in a city for many years (or for their entire life). The ‘discovery’ of the canal, as an unexpectedly new

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<sup>61</sup> Port of Sheffield participant questionnaire response, April 2013.

<sup>62</sup> Farman, ‘Mobile Media Performances as Asynchronous Embodiment’, p. 49.

<sup>63</sup> Montola, Stenros and Wærn, p. 42; Veronesi and Gemeinboeck, p. 364.

<sup>64</sup> Port of Sheffield participant questionnaire response, April 2013.

<sup>65</sup> Port of Sheffield participant questionnaire response, April 2013.

<sup>66</sup> Port of Sheffield participant questionnaire response, April 2013.

experience, challenged preconceptions of this part of the city and participants' existing personal geography of Sheffield.

#### 8.6.4 Regeneration and change

Throughout the development of *The Port of Sheffield audio-walk*, the focus of the performance subtly shifted. Rather than directly addressing the urban regeneration proposals along the Lower Don Valley, the performance became much more focussed around the processes of gathering, curating, and embedding a social history of the site. This was partly because of the unpredictable nature of collaborative working and partly because, unlike the previous case study in Liverpool, the area now lacks a resident population that might be impacted on by significant redevelopment.

Despite this shift, the questionnaire was an opportunity to ask participants, having walked the length of the site, to identify **what changes, if any, they might like to see along the canal and its immediate surroundings.**

The majority of responses focused on immediate practical measures: Upgrading the quality towpath surface (which is uneven and muddy in places), more bins (and less litter), more benches or other seating, and improved signage. This level of response echoes that found in the type of consultation surveys carried out by regeneration agencies and local planning authorities. While these range of improvements are quite clearly identified as being important to respondents, they also describe a series of measures that could arguably be anticipated by existing research and design guidance around the quality of urban public realm and canal towpaths.<sup>67</sup>

A number of other responses were wider in scope, and further analysis has identified an important ways in which interaction with the audio-walk impacted on participants' perceptions of the regeneration proposals. This was expressed by a number of respondents in terms of resistance to the idea of the site being 'completely regenerated'. These comments echoed many of the conversations held during the production phase and gathering sessions with storytellers and other contributors. While some, particularly the business owners, were keen to see new uses and development (and the associated footfall) brought to the canal, many others spoken to were more reticent. The attachment to the canal environment, as expressed by fishermen, walkers, and other users, went beyond the basic requirements for green or outdoor recreational spaces in the city. Instead, the positive value attached to this 'oasis' in the urban landscape was linked to its 'forgotten' status.

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<sup>67</sup> For example - the Canal and River Trust '*Guidance for Towpath Design*' <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/media/library/1728.pdf> [accessed 26 November 2014]



Rather than seeing the (post) industrial dereliction as a failed area that requires uplift or regeneration, these views begin to reframe this site and challenge the dominant narrative of a wider decline of the area. This argument also ties back into Spencer's suggestion that the canal represents a site of 'dialectical change'. The so-called 'failure' of the industrialised economy has made way for a new narrative – one where nature has begun to reclaim territory from human interests and, doing so, has created a place to be enjoyed and cherished.

#### **8.6.5 Limitations and failure**

Having been involved in an intense period of co-research and co-creation, it is important to also allow space for reflection on the limitations or failures of the collaborative practice documented in this case study. Some of the issues described in this section have been previously raised in the literature and practice review, particularly the issues around the potential for this form of performance to exclude those outside of a particular demographic (i.e. culturally-educated and technologically-aware). Further issues such as the levels of marketing, inclement weather, and technological barriers have also been previously reported by authors and practitioners as impacting on the success (or failure) of the audio-walk model.

In the Port of Sheffield project, a number of specific barriers have been identified as emerging from participant feedback and discussions within the project team. These included:

- the limited time and resource available to publicise the project meant that information about the performance was relatively difficult to find (limited to the FOTM programme listings and social media activity)
- the difficulties associated with potential participants not understanding the form and structure of this relatively 'new' form of site-specific performance
- the difficulties of finding where to start the walk (the canal basin / Victoria Quays is still unknown to many people in Sheffield)
- the difficulties of finding all of the relevant information on the website, which continued to be a work in progress throughout the project
- the requirement to own a Smartphone or MP3 player and be sufficiently proficient to load the app or audio files
- participants having both the time and inclination to undertake a walk of 3 miles (which was particularly during changeable weather)

Based on app downloads and records kept at the launch point during the FOTM, an estimated 60 people undertook the audio-walk during the 9 days of the festival. On top of this, the monthly

‘guided’ walks hosted from October 2012 to March 2013 attracted around 5-10 people each time. These numbers might be considered disappointing, particularly given the proportion of this number that had a previous personal connection with one of the members of the Port of Sheffield team. While may be too simplistic to judge ‘success’ of a creative practice in terms of numbers of participants, this raises questions about the suitability of some of the design decisions, particularly in terms of the technologies employed and the current public perception of this type of performance event. Having had time and space to reflect further on the project, it might also be argued that the full richness of the process (in terms of gathering stories, building networks, and exploring of the canal as a ‘lived’ place) were perhaps not reflected in the technologically mediated version of the audio-walk. Frustrations were also exacerbated by the stretched resources of the project. The investment of time and workload required to identify, gather, and edit stories was particularly challenging given that majority of the work undertaken on the project was voluntary. Egan has described a similar level of frustration with a lack of resources to devote to the project to really make it ‘more of what it could have been’.<sup>68</sup>

#### **8.6.6 Collaboration**

Attempts were made to set out a realistic and clear programme at the beginning of the collaborative project but, on reflection, the project aims (set out at the beginning of this chapter) were arguably somewhat over-optimistic. These included the conception, design and production of a public event within 9 months, for the project to be created in a way that it could help to develop and support the wider ambitions of the Port of Sheffield performance project, and contribute to the complex methodological aims and questions posed by RECITE research. As a co-researcher and co-practitioner, managing the balance between these three different goals throughout the lifespan of the audio-walk project emerged as the most significant challenge of this project as a piece of practice-led research. These difficulties are, at least partly, a result of both the co-researchers having such a fundamental stake in the project being perceived as a ‘success’ – in terms of justifying the FOTM funding, the pressures of personal and professional reputation within social, academic and professional networks, and in terms of the publicising the project within the city and beyond. This raises further questions around who is this type of practice-led project is serving – my individual impulse as a creative practitioner, my collaborative partners, the funding institution, the public participants, or the University academic process. The conflicting demands (and resultant pressures) of my own dual (or multiple) positioning within the project might be considered problematic and an inherent weakness of this collaborative practice-led approach as a research methodology. However, to some extent these issues could be linked to the individual nature of postgraduate level research

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<sup>68</sup> Egan.

and the pressures associated with carrying out a practice-led/ collaborative research project within a doctoral context. It is, therefore, possible that some of the pressures described above might be mitigated by undertaking this type of practice-led collaborative project as a research partnership or team, with different researchers undertaking different roles in the process and mutually reflecting upon and supporting the decisions taken at each stage.

A further question arises as to whether the manifold ambitions for the project (and its limitations) could have been managed more successfully by greater consideration of the issues and perhaps taking additional time during the initial planning phases of the collaboration with the Blue Shed. On reflection, the process undertaken in constructing and setting up the Port of Sheffield case study resonates with Haseman's portrayal of the disorderly nature of creative practice, and the tendency for the creative practitioner (or practitioner-researcher) to 'dive in' to practice and ask questions later.<sup>69</sup> However, it is perhaps an over-simplification to suggest that a more structured relationship between the (co)researchers and (co)practitioners may have changed the outcomes of the project - either as a performance or research case study. Attempting to fit the 'unruly' nature of creative practice (and practice-led research) around the numerous external demands of bidding for funding, meeting festival timescales, and working successfully with a range community participants is very likely to create its own set of pressures – pressures that can either be absorbed within the creative team (i.e. through working longer hours) or through some form of compromise of the end product.

Alongside these critical reflections it is also important to acknowledge the positive value of developing this form of interdisciplinary practice-led research. This includes a much fuller understanding of the level of adaptability, responsiveness, and patience required to collaboratively develop a site-specific practice. In this case, the overall success of a practice/ research collaboration between an architect/researcher and a performance-maker highlighted the potential for these two disciplines to inform and enrich one another, with the audio-walk operating not just as a spatial practice but as a meeting point and shared language between the two disciplines. From a personal perspective, involvement in the design and production of this project has been beneficial in a whole range of ways, not least the development of a new skills and networks. Perhaps most significantly, first-hand involvement in the Port of Sheffield project has provided an opportunity to become immersed in a new part of the city, meet a wide range of stakeholders and local people, and building a richer understanding of the value of storytelling (and listening) as a way of 'deep mapping' a place. Furthermore, by encouraging people to discover an unfamiliar site, this project (and others like it) are a demonstration of the unexpected pleasures that can be found by exploring the hidden corners

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<sup>69</sup> Haseman.

of the city – reinforcing the idea that other ‘new’ places and possibilities might be out there to be discovered – for both researchers and the wider public.

### 8.7 Postscript (aftermath): Victoria Quays and Tinsley Locks

*One of the unexpected legacies of project came not as a direct effect of the audio-walk, but as a result of the time invested in working with the organisations and local business at Victoria Quays. Dialogue with the management company of the Quays opened up an opportunity for the Port of Sheffield team to take over one of the empty commercial units at the canal basin. The large unit at the ground floor of the Terminal or ‘Grain’ Warehouse (one of the two Listed buildings at the canal basin) had been empty since the regeneration works in the 1990s. As part of the further activity of the Port of Sheffield, Deborah Egan was involved in temporarily ‘re-programming’ this unit, with the aim of bringing a wider range of cultural activities down to the canal basin. In 2013 the Terminal Warehouse was occupied by a series events including a one-day music festival and a residency by a local performance artist.*



Figure 8.19. 'Grain' a durational performance conceived and performed by Silvia Champion. The artist occupied the former Grain Warehouse at the Canal Basin in Sheffield during March 2013. Image: Author.

*This and other efforts to diversify the use of the canal site are likely to be overshadowed by developments in the rest of the city in the short-to-medium term. The relocation of the Sheffield Markets to the other side of the city centre has already induced a gravitational shift of the city centre further towards the south-west, with other large retailers also relocating. The imminent demolition*

*of the nearby Castle Market buildings (and the lack of detail in terms of strategy for the wider Castlegate area) could potentially have the effect of further isolating the canal basin for many years to come.*

*While the future of the canal basin appears uncertain, at the opposite end of the Port of Sheffield route a different story of arts-led regeneration is finally beginning to take shape. In 2008 the iconic (and well-loved) Tinsley Cooling Towers were demolished by the energy company E.ON who owned the site. In the face of public opposition to the demolition, the company pledged £500,000 to the city for a replacement piece of public artwork on the site by the M1 viaduct (near Tinsley Locks). Sheffield City Council have subsequently put forward a vision for this public art project as contributing to the regeneration of the area and creating a 'visitor attraction and destination'.<sup>70</sup> After several years of uncertainty, a brief for a series of small linked commissions was launched in 2014, with the idea that these smaller interventions might raise awareness of the site/project and explore the potential for a major public art project along the canal in the future.*

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<sup>70</sup> Sheffield City Council, 'M1 Gateway Art Project', 2014 <<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/planning-and-city-development/urban-design--conservation/public-art/m1-gateway.html>> [accessed 30 June 2014].



## 9 Performing as mapping: towards a methodology for performing as mapping and/or reimagining sites of urban regeneration.

### 9.0 Introduction

This research has examined theories and practices of site-specific performance, with the aim of identifying, theorising, and developing a set of critical 'tools' or methods for mapping sites of urban regeneration. A wide-ranging and multi-disciplinary review of literature and artistic practice has been carried out alongside empirical research in relation to three central case-study performances, supported by a range of other 'site-specific' practices. The use of performance has been framed using two interdisciplinary concepts - *mapping* and *participation* - within which some of the mutual concerns of architecture and performance have been drawn together. Few authors have defined the potential of this disciplinary intersection in such precise terms as Jane Rendell. Her proposition that public art and performance-making might play a vital role in extending the critical purview of architectural and urban design practice was both a departure point for and reference point during the course of this research.<sup>1</sup> Building upon this work, this thesis has described the methodological (and propositional) possibilities of performance practices in articulating unheard narratives or revealing unseen socio-spatial conditions in complex or contested urban sites.

As subjective, ephemeral, and embodied experiences, the nature of performance tends to resist fixed forms of documentation and interpretation. Wherever possible, sites and performances have been experienced first-hand, engaging with the performance as both a researcher and public participant. In the development of a methodology for the empirical research, a number of methodological approaches and data collection methods have been tested, with research conducted both 'on' and 'with' performance-makers. However, the breadth and case-based nature of the empirical research means that any claims made in relation to particular sites and performances have been acknowledged as tentative and provisional.

By taking performance as a methodological and epistemological lens through which to examine the relationship between people and places, this research aims to be able to open up critical discussions that might not have emerged through existing architectural design and research methodologies and tools alone. The key contribution of this thesis is, in a broad sense, methodological. Site-specific performance is proposed not only as a mapping instrument (or to extend the toolkit of architects or urbanists), but is put forward as a methodology for a range of spatial practitioners and the wider public to critically engage with complex and contested urban sites *as lived places*.

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<sup>1</sup> Rendell, *Art and Architecture*.

## 9.1 Discussion

### 9.1.1 Specificity and locality

The literature review section of the thesis began by turning towards the field of performance studies, and examined the practices of environmental performance, land art, Avant-garde and activist artists, tracing the conceptual roots of performance-making and site-specificity. By their very nature, site specific performances pertain and respond to local environmental, social and political conditions. Drawing upon the cross-cutting writing of Pearson, Kwon, Deutsche, Wilkie, and McAuley (amongst others) this thesis has put forward a definition of site-specificity that is flexible enough to accommodate emerging technological practices, yet understands such practices to be grounded in the political and social context of a place. **Chapter 2** addressed the critical dimensions of site-specific performance: the principles of resisting commodification (through non-object/event-making and multiple authorship), the way in which practitioners address issues and audiences outside of the traditional gallery or theatre environment, the rooting of the production and reception of practice within marginalised sites and communities, and the way that site-specific performance-makers can engage with public participants and both material, social, and real-and-imagined dimensions of the site. Through the writing of Tschumi and Kaye in particular, the chapter explored the way in which that site-specific performance practices expose the ‘disjunction’ between conceptions of (ideal) space and experiences of (real) space, a theme that is further developed in the discussion section of this chapter.

### 9.1.2 A tactical practice

The open-ended, interdisciplinary approach to this research has necessitated a highly inductive process, with the original theoretical grounding in performance studies literature transgressing into a range of other academic disciplines and fields of practice. **Chapter 3** introduced the concept of *mapping* as a conceptual and methodological bridge between (site-specific) performance and cartographic activities within fields of architecture and art. In architecture, mapping has been typically understood as a way of surveying, documenting, and gathering knowledge of the site in readiness to make propositions. Drawing upon authors including Lefebvre, de Certeau, and Corner, the chapter explored the critical challenges to the hegemony of Cartesian cartographic space, and developed an understanding of the map as a dynamic assemblage upon which multiple realities, forms of knowledge and understandings of the site might be brought together and articulated.

Unlike traditional representational cartographies, site-specific performances rarely seek to produce fixed or frozen representations of the site. The social and environmental conditions encountered by performance-makers are recognised as constantly in flux - emerging and disappearing through the



accelerating processes of urban change in social, political, and environmental terms.<sup>2</sup> Kelley has argued that this is the key difference between an ‘architectural’ notion of site (as used or mapped) as opposed to a more artistic or ‘human’ notion of place (as lived or remembered).<sup>3</sup> Looking outside the discipline of architecture to other critically creative mapping practices therefore highlights the ‘inherently reactive’ and immutable nature of architectural practice.<sup>4</sup> The maps of the city created through site-specific performance practices are open about their limitations - as contingent, partial and ephemeral, they foreground an experiential view of spaces, places, and communities. In acknowledging the multiple experiences of place(s), performance (as mapping) also exposes the impossibility of the task faced by cartography, urban planning and design in attempting to strategically represent and respond to the complexities of time and change, contested socio-political histories and futures, and the subjectivity of individual urban experience.

### 9.1.3 Spatial agencies

It has been argued that mainstream architectural production and discourse now occupies a ‘weakened’ position - constrained by increasingly technical specialisation of the construction industry, the national-scale (and, increasingly, global-scale) politics of urban planning and regeneration, and professional frameworks such as the RIBA Plan of Work.<sup>5</sup> These constraints are perhaps overshadowed by a wider shift in architecture as increasingly subservient to the demands of the marketplace and the forces of production and consumption. In this context, buildings, public realm, and urban districts are primarily understood in terms of asset-value – and as commodities to be marketed, traded and profited on. Within design practice, this is often translated into a requirement to demonstrate the value of a particular design strategy in terms of its technical or economic ‘performance’. Architecture might therefore be portrayed as field of design that has become preoccupied with ‘performance’ in the sense of thermal, structural, material, spatial, or commercial efficiencies. It has been argued that these demands have come at a cost of architecture becoming distanced from its former (perhaps ‘utopian’) role as a socially beneficial or humanising force.<sup>6</sup>

This shift can also be identified in the discourse around community participation in the processes of urban planning and design. The opening sections of **chapter 4** charted the way in which the

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<sup>2</sup> Brook and Dunn, p. 231.

<sup>3</sup> Kelley, p. 142.

<sup>4</sup> Brook and Dunn, p. 231.

<sup>5</sup> Till, ‘Architecture Is Not Architecture Is Not Architecture Is Not Architecture’; Awan, Schneider and Till.

<sup>6</sup> Brook and Dunn, p. 231.

mainstream planning and design processes have come to view local communities as an obstacle to be negotiated, in order that the vision of the designer (or paying client) comes away ‘unscathed’.<sup>7</sup>

The view of architecture as inevitably bound to commercial or technical demands has not gone unchallenged. A range of ‘spatial practitioners’ and community organisations have sought to develop alternative approaches and value systems in the production of urban projects and interventions.<sup>8</sup> Often operating from art practice, community planning, or the fringes of the architectural profession, such practices seek to challenge to hegemonic ‘performance-driven’ approach to development by prioritising the needs of a particular community, locality, and working from bottom-up. In doing so, practitioners including Raumlabor, Public Works, Jeanne van Heeswijk, and Stealth.Unlimited have adopted approaches, tools, theories, and funding streams from the world of performance practice.

In the field of performance studies, the equivalent ‘relational’ turn has seen an upsurge in projects and practices that invite others into the processes of reception and production. Projects that address social problems, marginalised communities, or contested spaces have also been explored by a spectrum of practitioners from site-specific performance-makers to community artists. While these practices have been described and theorised by a number of new ‘genres’ (participatory/ dialogic/ relational/ socially-engaged), they might also be grouped using an expanded conception of ‘site-specific’, where ‘site’ is diversified as the site of a community, the site of a social or political issue, as well as the site as a physical terrain. Much has been made of the emancipatory possibilities of site-specific and participatory forms of performance, including the potential to (re)engage local people with their environment and to challenge dominant modes of understanding, behaving and performing (in) urban space. Creative engagement through performing or playing in the city has also been put forward as a way of re-engaging those who may feel excluded by other modes of social or political participation.

The idea that participatory and site-specific artistic practice might unlock larger cultural, social and economic benefits has also gained significant traction in recent years. Fuelled in part by claims made by those promoting and funding the arts, recent government policy has placed a value on the contribution of the arts in community engagement, cultural industries, cultural tourism, and urban regeneration. At a national and international scale, this shift has opened up a substantial range of funding opportunities. Large-scale initiatives such as the City of Culture, Biennial art festivals, and the Cultural Olympiad have sought to catalyse economic and social transformations across the UK.

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<sup>7</sup> Till, ‘The Negotiation of Hope’, p. 26.

<sup>8</sup> Awan, Schneider and Till.

However, with increased attention and public funding comes increased scrutiny. The role of performance-making within economic and social policy has opened up widespread interest (and criticism) from researchers, planners, and policy-makers. **Chapter 4** went on to examine some of the ontological and methodological conflicts associated with demonstrating and measuring the benefits of artistic practice. These difficulties were explored in the context of wider critical tensions that have been produced by the instrumentalisation and commodification of performance-making by political and economic interests.

#### **9.1.4 Performative research**

The inter- or trans-disciplinary nature of this project required an initial exploratory investigation of the researchable territory between the two disciplines. The taxonomy of **chapter 5** was a method of organising the wide-ranging review of contemporary performance practices and ‘spatial agencies’ according to two key criteria - who goes to the site during a performance, and what are the key activities that happen there. Out of this review, six overlapping models of site-specific performance practice were identified. The empirical research focused on three out of these six models – the three that were peripatetic in nature and required (or at least encouraged) a direct corporeal experience of the site by public participants. This choice was not only significant in terms of narrowing the scope of the empirical research, but was intended to focus on the practices that encouraged participants to explore urban sites and, in doing so, see, touch, smell, and listen to the city in new ways. This builds upon the recent work of critics such as Oddey, who has looked at the way in which site-specific peripatetic performances can challenge the stability of the city and enable participants to access ‘energies of imagination’.<sup>9</sup>

#### **9.1.5 Sites of regeneration**

From a broad conceptual perspective, the research has explored the way in which urban sites might be mapped and reimagined through performance practice. However, the study is also grounded within the recent political and economic context of the UK and the difficulties (that span from global to local scales) in managing the deep impact of the recent financial crisis. The faltering economy and abrupt discontinuation of urban development and regeneration projects has had a particularly strong impact in northern England. Here the changing economic tides have revealed marginal, leftover sites and communities that have been failed by the promises of urban regeneration.

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<sup>9</sup> Oddey, p. 46.

In every city one can find vacant sites or ‘interstices’ in the urban fabric - marginal spaces that have resisted development for commercial, legal, or political reasons.<sup>10</sup> In the economic downturn such interstitial spaces have expanded, and new fissures, sometimes dramatic in scale, become revealed. Where political institutions and commercial agents might describe these spaces in terms such as ‘market failure’ or ‘opportunity sites’, artists and other creative practitioners see a different kind of opportunity, with marginal sites representing spaces for resistance and imagination.

A strong sense of locality and grounded-ness has been applied in shaping the research questions, designing the empirical research, and identifying the three case studies set out in **chapters 6-8**. Situating this study within a local context (northern English cities) was not only important for regular first-hand access to the three case study sites, but in drawing upon personal knowledge and understanding of the political and social histories that continue to shape the urban landscape. This ‘site-specific’ or idiographic approach to research has both strengths and limitations. By its very nature, a highly qualitative (deep mapping) approach limits the breadth of any study, and potentially creates difficulties in terms of applying or transferring findings to other sites and contexts. Any findings from the empirical studies must, therefore, be contextualised within a particular political and social situation.

#### **9.1.6 Research with: a collaborative, practice-led methodology**

Within this thesis, performance and performativity have been used as critical frameworks to explore a number of broader issues around the way that cities are understood, represented, and produced. The methodology developed for the engagement with the first two case studies sought to contextualise this understanding through a process of conducting *research on* site-specific performances as case studies. The research design brought together a number of methods, including semi-structured interviews with participants and practitioners, a participant experience questionnaire, analysis of performance documents, as well as first-hand observation of both production sessions and public performances. While this type of multi-methods approach has been valuable in terms of analysing site-specific performances as a ‘cluster of narratives’, it is arguably over-emphasises performance as a ‘bounded’ event - one that happens at a particular place (and time) for a particular audience or group of participants. Methodologically speaking, the collection of qualitative data at two or three key moments leading up to a ‘final’ performance is perhaps less appropriate in understanding the network of social and political relations that are constructed within longer-term projects or *situations*. This shift in understanding has required an equivalent shift

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<sup>10</sup> Gil Doron, ‘...badlands, Blank Space, Border Vacuums, Brown Fields, Conceptual Nevada, Dead Zones ...’, *Field Journal*, 1 (2007), 10–23; Solà-Morales.

in research methodology, with greater focus on ethnographic, collaborative, and transformative research forms.

In response, this thesis has developed a methodology where the researcher undertakes *research with* performance practitioners. This repositioning was framed around the design of a collaborative and ‘practice-led’ methodology for the development of the third research case study. Developing this form of research collaboration has required the adaptation of approaches from the social sciences (co-operative inquiry / action research) with those from fields of art and design (arts-informed/ practice-led). This approach employed creative practice as a common ground - initiating a practice-led research project as a productive space for an architect-researcher and site-specific performance-maker to come together as co-designers and co-researchers over the course of a long-term engagement with a site. As well as providing opportunities, the positioning of the researcher as both co-creator and co-researcher has posed a number of challenges, particularly in terms of the pressure it places on the co-researchers to create, reflect upon, and analyse practices together. As such, there has been a strong reflexive strand in the third case study (and throughout the research project), with an openness around both the methodological limitations and the areas that this thesis has not been able to address.

## 9.2 Propositions and findings

Throughout the course of the designing and carrying out the empirical research it has been important to regularly return to the initial research aims or propositions – particularly the central question of how site-specific performances change the way places are perceived. The discussion in this section reflects critically on two key propositions – drawing in key references from the literature and practice review alongside analysis of findings from the empirical case-study research. The first of these propositions relates to the way that site-specific performance impacts on its participants:

### 9.2.1 The creation of site-specific performance in urban sites (as a ‘more-than-representational’ mapping process) engages with both the place it is performed and its public participants - increasing awareness, changing existing perceptions, and encouraging future exploration of the site.

The challenges associated with the design of a methodology that can incorporate the *participant experience* of site-specific performances have already been discussed in some detail in **chapter 5** and **appendix 2**. However, before drawing conclusions from the empirical research carried out in relation to this first proposition, it is important to briefly recap some of the limitations of the participant data collection carried out in this research. In two of the case studies a participant experience questionnaire was used, which was determined to be a reasonable compromise in the face of the

practical difficulties of conducting other forms of participant data collection. Various additional measures were taken to mitigate the weaknesses of collecting qualitative responses via a questionnaire. These measures and the questionnaire design resulted in a good overall response rate (around 15-20%), and with the majority of respondents providing rich and detailed qualitative descriptions of their personal experience of the performances. Nonetheless, consideration of recent literature from the field of reception studies raises a number of other issues. This includes the potential difficulties of asking respondents to translate an 'ineffable' aesthetic and embodied experience such as performance back into language via a written questionnaire.<sup>11</sup>

The way in which site-specific performances imprint 'strange familiarity', one that keeps the site in the mind of the participants for weeks or months after the event itself, has been previously described by Hunter.<sup>12</sup> This phenomenon was also articulated by Alan Lane in relation to the *Mapping the City* performance:

*"If you live in Hull and you walk past the BBC building in 3 months' time after seeing the show – I don't think you're going to be able to pass it without remembering the moment when you saw a woman take a swan dive off the top and stop hovering in the air."*<sup>13</sup>

Another potential weakness in the methodology was the lack of longitudinal dimension to the study of participant experience, and the methodology was unable to capture the way in which the interpretation of the performance and the perceptions of the site might have changed over the months and years following the performance.

While keeping the limitation in mind, a number of themes have emerged from the analysis of participant responses in the three case study performances (supported by first-hand participant experiences and reflections of the researcher). Participant responses in both the Hull and Sheffield case studies described the way that the performance changed the preconceptions and perceptions of the sites of performance. For those respondents who previously knew the site, the memory of the performance intertwined with prior knowledge, associations and memories of the site (or of other similar sites). For those participants who were being taken to the site of a performance for the first time (sites that they might have not otherwise visited or known about), one of the strongest themes that emerged was the excitement of discovery. In both cases, the performances were found to have

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<sup>11</sup> Reason; D. Gauntlett, 'Using New Creative Visual Research Methods to Understand the Place of Popular Media in People's Lives', *IAMCR 2004. University of Bournemouth*, 2004.

<sup>12</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Lane, 'Research Interview with Alan Lane, Artistic Director of Slung Low'.

redrawn participants' personal geographies of the city, uncovering new interests in previously meaningless or marginal territories or overlaying familiar spaces with new meanings.

The potential for creative practices to alter public perceptions of vacant or 'forgotten' urban sites has been identified as one method of evidencing the social benefits of deploying the artistic or performance practices in the context of urban regeneration.<sup>14</sup> Within this research, findings from the participant experience research related to the first proposition [10.2.1] indicate that site-specific performance practices might play a role in this aspect of 're-envisioning' – potentially as a 'soft' form of public engagement that connects public participants to historical and future narratives of a site. This finding has potential significance for civic authorities, urban planners and other decision-making bodies and agencies that may seek to harness the effect (or affect) of these practices as catalysing or enabling instruments within the very early stages of the urban regeneration process. This was illustrated by the Slung Low case study (chapter 6), where Hull City Council were keen to see 'something happen' in the site following the continuing market failure and collapse of the proposed urban regeneration proposals.

Despite this finding, a degree of caution is required. An analysis of site-specific performance practices that focuses on the efficacy of practice alone (i.e. its potential to change public perceptions of a site or support a new vision) is insufficient – particularly given the complex, critical, intimate, sensitive, and contingent nature of the examples of practice described throughout this thesis. Not only are these forms of performance unlikely to be viewed as the 'most effective' for the type of re-envisioning imagined by many top-down institutions, but in being framed in this way, site-specific practices are at risk of being reduced to a tool deployed by institutions as part of a top-down policy or strategy (i.e. a mode of 'instrumental participation'). An instrumental role also tends to emphasises the conception of performance as a bounded cultural event where others (the public) are invited to engage with it (as participants) on the terms of the performance-maker and the commissioning institution.

This discussion raises important wider questions as who is invited (and who might be excluded) from attending site-specific performance. Each of the three performance-makers involved in the case-study research described varied attempts to challenge the divide between 'high-brow' and 'low-brow' art forms, and in all three case studies the performance-makers made efforts to bring local residents into the production and reception of the works. However, these efforts serve as a reminder that significant barriers to participation in these events remain - whether this is in terms of

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<sup>14</sup> Graeme Evans and Phyllida Shaw, 'The Contribution of Culture to Regeneration in the UK: A Review of Evidence' (DCMS, 2004), p. 26 <[http://neumann.hec.ca/iccpr/PDF\\_Texts/Evans\\_Graeme.pdf](http://neumann.hec.ca/iccpr/PDF_Texts/Evans_Graeme.pdf)> [accessed 13 November 2013].

restrictions on the number of participants or tickets, the monetary cost of a ticket, the need to own expensive technology in order to participate, or the prior knowledge required to locate the event in the first place.<sup>15</sup> A potentially more significant barrier might be the 'social cost' of participating - with those 'closer' to the world of performance (i.e. the culturally educated classes) able to participate at less social risk than those who might perceive themselves as 'outside' the world of contemporary performance.<sup>16</sup> This study has only gone so far in this regard, and further research is required to better understand how accessible site-specific (or site-located) events are to a range of potential participants, including the way in which performances are described, marketed, priced, accessed, and reviewed.

In deploying site-specific performance and other forms of artistic practice for instrumental purposes (to help reimagine sites of regeneration or to achieve certain social benefits), civic authorities or commissioning institutions may also be required to pursue material evidence to demonstrate the (supposed) benefits. The need to measure or prove value in order to justify (or expand) funding programmes can create deep epistemological tensions between those who seek to measure impact and performance-makers, who are often resistant to the idea of evaluation. Despite a range of academic and policy research, existing methods of evaluation have often failed to develop suitable methodologies to 'map' the multiple and complex ways that performance practice can impact across a site or community. Moreover, practitioners may be fundamentally opposed to the instrumentalisation or commodification art for the benefit of those who might eventually profit if urban regeneration is catalysed. Others may be more ambivalent, making a choice to compromise on idealistic principles in order to keep getting funding to make new work.

The conceptual arguments explored in the opening sections of chapter 2 drew upon Schechner's efficacy of performance and Lefebvre's 'freeing' of theatre from institutions to propose a working definition of (site-specific) performance as both praxis and poesis. This conceptualisation attempts to move beyond the opposing visions for arts practices (including performance) located in the urban realm – that they should be a vehicle for social cohesion (a focus on ends or use-value) or that they should be freed to operate as a critical vehicle to challenge existing social practices (a focus on means or processes).<sup>17</sup> This represents an ongoing tension within site-specific performance practices, which may be read as emancipatory or critical while also acknowledging that they are being funded and valued by potentially commodifying forces of the market. This tension locates site-

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<sup>15</sup> Mapping the City (£10/ticket, 150 participants approx.). The Anfield Home Tour' (free, 200 participants approx.). The Port of Sheffield (free, 100 participants approx., smartphone or mp3 player required).

<sup>16</sup> Beech (unpaginated).

<sup>17</sup> Chapple and Jackson, p. 480.



specific performance within a wider set of emerging spatial agencies that seek to propose alternatives to the dominant modes of spatial production while also relying on borrowed time and other resources from institutions (academic, arts festivals, or commercial practices).

Within the context of this thesis and its attempts to bridge between the fields of performance studies and architecture/ urbanism, the question is not so much *whether* artistic practices should have use-value, but *how* that efficacy is translated into real-life practice (that is situated, commissioned, produced, performed and evaluated). As a practitioner, this requires an approach that is both tactical and reflexive: Holding on to the emancipatory potential of performance to provoke its participants and generate 'unexpected connections', retaining a sense of self-criticality, while also acknowledging the role (and demands) of institutions and funding bodies.<sup>18</sup>

### **9.2.2 Site-specific projects that acknowledge and celebrate local people as active or creative agents can be transformational – enabling those involved to articulate the multiple histories, claims, or potentials of a site.**

Where the first proposition [10.2.1] understood site-specific performance in terms of a 'bounded' socio-cultural event, the second acknowledges the shift in understanding the nature of site-specific practice. The diversification of the site as a social and political field has produced new types of site-specific performance projects. These *situations* or long-term projects tend to involve multiple actors and agencies, involve a much longer programme (and more funding), and typically require a particular skillset on the part of the practitioner. This form of practice may also combine several of the performance models identified in the taxonomy, with different modes and moments of expression at different points within a project. The use of (a) performance as a means of representing other levels of a participatory engagement (as in *the Anfield Home Tour*) is just one example of the complex entanglement of site-specific practice and site.

The second proposition assumes that the role of the performance-maker is one of an activator or collaborator, with a much greater emphasis on agency and local inhabitants as active co-producers of a project. Rather than asking people to (passively) respond to a predetermined and externally-conceived representation of the city or site, participants are encouraged to 'map their own experiences' through the articulation of everyday individual creative practices, stories, and acts of resistance.<sup>19</sup> The ability to 'let go' and invite others into the design and production process is vitally important within this form of practice, particularly if the project initiator is to avoid a form of 'ethnographic self-fashioning'.<sup>20</sup> Practitioners also need to recognise that while community members

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<sup>18</sup> Kester, p. 153.

<sup>19</sup> Chapple and Jackson, p. 483.

<sup>20</sup> Foster, 'The Artist as Ethnographer', pp. 306–307; Kester, p. 171.

may well be ‘experts of their location’, a community is neither homogenous nor passive. Moreover, individuals may be disillusioned with external ‘community initiatives’, and therefore resistant to the idea of becoming involved in an artistic situation. The process of letting go or ‘de-centring’ the role of the performance-maker is recognised in the practice of Van Heeswijk (chapter 7), who highlights the importance of the move from project instigator to active co-producer or co-participant:

*“In that (role) it’s important that you are capable of letting go of some of your own ‘subjectivity’ and your own idea of what is good design, or your own ‘desired intervention’. It has to come from within, because if you say to people ‘let’s take matters into our own hands, let’s try to create an alternative, let’s try to create another sense of place in which a lot of people have a stake’ then I think it is important that there is not one lead designer - it is something that is done in a more collaborative way.”<sup>21</sup>*

The (re)positioning of the artist as collaborator is just one of four key issues or pressure-points that have been identified within the role of the site-specific practitioner as local activator. The second centres on the reputational and other benefits gained by the artist or performance-maker as a result of site-specific commissions. Site-specific practitioners may be invited by institutions or authorities as a result of their national or international reputation, but may then be critiqued as exploitative – creating projects with communities to serve their own needs and develop their own reputation as an artist.<sup>22</sup> Even where the objectives of the project are purportedly progressive (e.g. challenging negative preconceptions of a community or the dominant narrative of a site), imbalances in the benefits extracted from a project can leave practitioners in a precarious ethical position. This is evident where site-specific practice produces critical recognition and invitations to work across the world, whereas the community might be left with little material change in their situation.<sup>23</sup> The third issue is the need for performance-makers to somehow balance the desire to become embedded in the social site as a kind-of social worker, activist, or friend of the community whilst also maintaining the distance required for criticality.<sup>24</sup> Finally (perhaps most importantly), practitioners and commissioning agencies should be very wary of over-promising in complex contested sites where years of government policy and professional intervention has failed. Attempting to reframe the vision of a place or to heal societal cracks through engagement and participation is a long and complex process, and if funding is based around a short-term festival or performance programme

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<sup>21</sup> van Heeswijk, ‘Taking Matters into Your Own Hands’.

<sup>22</sup> Kwon, ‘One Place after Another: Notes on Site Specificity’.

<sup>23</sup> Kester, p. 172.

<sup>24</sup> Hal Foster, *The Return of the Real: The Avant-Garde at the End of the Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2001), pp. 223–224.

there is a serious danger of raising aspirations without the backing of a longer term programme of support.

No single solution is put forward to resolve these tensions. Analysis of the case studies (particularly in Liverpool and Sheffield) supports the claims made by existing literature around the transformative potential of participatory forms of site-specific performance. Practices that are embedded within the social site and its community as 'subject, material and audience' can articulate or amplify previously unheard voices and stories - celebrating local people as active and creative contributors. However, any transformative effects should be considered as an accumulation over the lifespan of a long-term engagement at neighbourhood scale, rather than an 'epiphanic' moment of transformation.<sup>25</sup> Site-specific practitioners must find ways to collaborate proactively and productively with local voices – both critical and supportive - and resist the tendency to presuppose outcomes or become fashioned by the top-down forces of instrumentalisation. Participatory forms of site-specific practice can only survive this tension between means and ends if a genuine spirit of collaboration can be fostered and sustained. This requires a careful balancing act on the part of the practitioner - a requirement for empathic engagement, a commitment to social/ ethical principles in the way that they practice, and an ability to be reflexive and acknowledge the impact of the artist and institution, particularly if the artist or performance-maker is not local to the site. Building upon existing literature on participatory practice and findings from the case study research might be summarised as the following set of 'best practice' requirements for participatory site-specific practice:<sup>26</sup>

- a grounding in a local social and political context
- the development of a productive relationship with funding/ institutional bodies – one that allows sufficient space to be critical of institutions if required
- regular engagement with the site and local community over the lifetime of a project and building in sufficient time to spend with local participants beyond a surface-level engagement
- the ability not just to listen, but to allow the views and knowledge of local people to transform the artistic practice themselves
- a commitment to ethically and socially responsible forms of practice, including the sharing of the rewards of practice with participants and the local community (where possible and appropriate)

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<sup>25</sup> Kester, p. 171.

<sup>26</sup> Similar recommendations have been stated by many previous studies, and are general 'best practice' guidelines that could equally be applied to local involvement across urban planning and architecture.

- an openness to emergent possibilities, multiple voices, and contested views, with space in the project allowed for emerging creativity and unforeseen possibilities
- an openness to drawing in other local agencies and groups (e.g. charities, healthcare, politicians) where the complexity of local socio-political issues is beyond the scope of the project
- a hopeful/ emancipatory outlook on place that rejects cynicism and the language of failed communities

### 9.2.3 Multiple scales of engagement

The transformational potential of site-specific practices to ‘activate’ local groups or communities has been identified in a number of the projects examined during the course of this research. However, the political and social impact of such neighbourhood-scale engagement is often limited to the confines of those individuals immediately involved in the project. This issue has previously been identified by critics of participatory practice, with Bishop applying Ranciere’s notion of a mediating ‘third term’ as a way of describing the need to reach out beyond the immediate ‘site of reception’.<sup>27</sup> With this in mind, it could be argued that suggest site-specific performance is most critically effective when a multi-layered approach of site engagement is undertaken. This provides the different stakeholders on a site (the local community, the wider public of the city, local decision-makers, and professions involved in built environment design and regeneration) with a range of different opportunities to engage within longer-term projects or situations. This requires the invention of novel methods to communicate the stories, desires, and imaginations of the community within a wider audience or public context. While Bishop suggests the use of documentary film-making as one method of representing the complexity of participatory practice to a wider audience, it might also be argued that this form of documentation is overly fixative, and frames the project through one lens. Moreover, media representations (including film, photography, or web-based forms) displace the project out of the site, therefore overlooking the potency of first-hand or embodied experiences. In contrast, the models of site-specific performance documented throughout this thesis (including the audio-walk or guided tour) are potentially powerful ways of reaching this secondary, wider level of engagement with participatory projects, while retaining a direct and embodied connection to the site itself.

This is not to say all mediation should be viewed as an attempt to commodify or strip performance of its liveness. A further important consideration is raised by Kester’s call for documentation of participatory forms of site-specific practice. Despite the risks of abstraction or institutionalisation,

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<sup>27</sup> Bishop, p. 284.

Kester argues that documentation is vital if future practitioners are to avoid the risks of 'reinventing the wheel' each time they engage with complex social sites.<sup>28</sup> Of course, this form of documentation goes far beyond the common set of marketing photographs, and requires a critical account and reflection upon of the work, drawing on the multiplicity of narratives of the makers, watchers, participants, and commissioning and funding institutions. Despite the focus on this thesis on non-representational and embodied forms of mapping, this documentation process might also include the mapping or representation of the dramaturgical layers of the performances in time and space. As demonstrated in the case study documentation, this can also act as a way of infusing and drawing over the representational maps of the city with other layers of subjectivity and narrative.

#### 9.2.4 The performativity of space and place

As explored through the literature review section, authors from a wide range of disciplinary and theoretical positions have applied the concept of 'performativity' as a way of theorising the dynamic and fluid nature of space and place - contesting the fixed objective or Cartesian conceptions of space as a fixed container or 'stage' on which social activities take place.

In the field of architecture, authors such as Christian Norberg-Schulz and Juhani Pallasmaa have drawn upon phenomenological philosophies (of Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger respectively) - calling for an approach to architecture that responds to our bodily experience of being-in-the-world.<sup>29</sup> In taking a phenomenological stance, Norberg-Schulz in particular has challenged the conception of space as an abstract or mathematical construct, arguing that landscapes and cities can only be understood in terms inhabited or lived places.<sup>30</sup>

Meanwhile, postmodern geographers such as Ed Soja and Doreen Massey have been part of a broader shift towards an understanding of space and place as 'always in process' and framed by differences of experience, politics, race, class, and gender.<sup>31</sup> Massey has gone on to extend Bergson's philosophy of duration to our understanding of space. In doing so, she conceptualises places as a product of both events and social relations. In contrast, spatial representations (maps) are merely slices of space that are simply not capable of representing the nature of space as unfixed or unfinished.<sup>32</sup> Massey's questioning of the nature of space and representation is closely related to the concerns of Del Casino and Hanna, who argue that: "*all spaces are always already representations*

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<sup>28</sup> Kester, pp. 190–191.

<sup>29</sup> Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Architecture : Meaning and Place : Selected Essays.*, Architectural Documents (New York: Electa/Rizzoli, 1988), pp. 44–45.

<sup>30</sup> Norberg-Schulz, pp. 44–45.

<sup>31</sup> Doreen B Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage Publications, 2005), p. 140.

<sup>32</sup> Massey, p. 130.

that are produced by and productive of a myriad number of bodily practices and performances".<sup>33</sup> In applying post-structural theory to 'dismantle' the distinction between the 'representational' space of the map and the 'real' space of the city, they argue that both representations and spaces co-produce each other through spatial performance. Each of these conceptualisations of space and place draw significantly on the writing of Michel de Certeau, who has been a key reference point across a number of themes covered in this thesis. In de Certeau's celebrated proposition that to walk the city is to continuously rewrite it, or 'appropriate' it for yourself, space is conceptualised as only being brought into existence through practices of walking (and performing).<sup>34</sup> In framing site-specific performance practices 'as maps', this thesis has built upon post-modern, post-structural, and phenomenological theories of space as multiple, subjective, unfinished, and 'always becoming'.<sup>35</sup>

In common with more traditional cartographies and other mediations (such as film or photography), site-specific performance could be considered as a lens – one that is authored with the aim of framing or filtering the complexity of the city in order to make it legible.<sup>36</sup> However, the potency of site-specific performance is in the unique way it can layer (or collapse) multiple realities – (both fictional and real) – onto one another. Multiple meanings and readings of performance and site 'amend and compromise' one another, forcing participants to question the real and the 'representational' and therefore look at the city anew.<sup>37</sup> The insertion of performance practices into established frameworks and communities of the (real) city can therefore reveal or articulate ways in which meanings of place (and therefore places themselves) are not as stable or fixed as they might first appear. This effect has been theorised as the 'palimpsest' or 'imprint' of a performance, which (over time) can have the effect of re-framing the personal and social experience of place.<sup>38</sup>

Within this research, this phenomenon has been observed in a number of different situations and at a range of scales:

- In the destabilising of the (powerful) politics underpinning a top-down policy or masterplan.
- In the dismantling of a set of prejudices or negative perceptions of a place.

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<sup>33</sup> Vincent J. Del Casino Jr. and Stephen P. Hanna, 'Beyond the "Binaries": A Methodological Intervention for Interrogating Maps as Representational Practices', *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies*, 4 (2006), 34–56 (p. 41).

<sup>34</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 97–98.

<sup>35</sup> Massey, p. 59.

<sup>36</sup> Kaye, p. 41.

<sup>37</sup> Pearson and Shanks, p. 23.

<sup>38</sup> Kaye, *Site-Specific Art*, p. 11; Kathleen Irwin, 'The Ambit of Performativity: How Site Makes Meaning in Site-Specific Performance', in *Performance design*, ed. by Dorita Hannah and Olav Harsløf (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2008), pp. 39–61 (p. 46); *Temporary Urban Spaces: Concepts for the Use of City Spaces*, ed. by Florian Haydn and Robert Temel (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2006), p. 60.

- In the discovery of a hidden place destabilising the previously assured geography of a home city, or the destabilising of assumptions of the nature of space, time, and intimacy in location-based performances.<sup>39</sup>
- In exposing the disjunction between the everyday experience of the real city and the (idealised) conceptions of space as represented by the rhetoric of political agencies, the masterplans created by architects and planning authorities, or the speculations of property developers.<sup>40</sup>

The creative destabilisation of site-specific practices has been shown to manifest in many different forms or ‘dramaturgies’.<sup>41</sup> In terms of scale they can range from the simple transgressive gesture of breakfasting on a public pavement (Permanent Breakfast), to hosting large-scale operatic performances in a previously-threatening metro station (Raumlabor). Political acts of resistance can emerge in an intimate exchange of stories in someone’s living room (Jeanne van Heeswijk), or while listening underneath a motorway (Graeme Miller). Performances might make participants slow down, pause, and look – encouraging them to seek alternative currents within the often frantic bustle of the contemporary urban life (Invisible Flock). Or venture into places that they could never imagine having existed in ‘their’ city (X Homes). The level of commitment might range from joining a bus tour (Forced Entertainment) or a receiving a phone call (Blast Theory), to spending a year outdoors (Teching Hsieh). Although diverse in structure and aesthetic, taken together this field of practice raises vital questions of ‘where we find ourselves’ – in terms of the ‘here and now’ as well as looking ahead to future times and spaces.<sup>42</sup>

### 9.3 Implications for practice and further research

The interdisciplinary and exploratory nature of this research has necessitated an open and flexible approach. While informed and refined by literature from a number of disciplines, the direction of the research has also been driven by the opportunities that have emerged for collaboration with performance-makers in the field. This led to the empirical research in three very different urban contexts, as well as first-hand participation in (and research into) a broad range of site-specific

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<sup>39</sup> G. McAuley, ‘Local Acts: Site-Specific Performance Practice’, *About Performance*, 2007, 7–11; Kathleen Irwin, ‘The Ambit of Performativity: How Site Makes Meaning in Site-Specific Performance’, in *Performance design*, ed. by Dorita Hannah and Olav Harsløf (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2008), pp. 39–61; Victoria Hunter, ‘Do You Come Here Often? Mapping Urban Space through Embodied Encounters’ (presented at the Place, Possibility, Performance, University of Leeds, 2014).

<sup>40</sup> Bernard Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction* (London: MIT Press, 1994); See also Tschumi in Nick Kaye, *Site-Specific Art: Performance, Place and Documentation* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 56.

<sup>41</sup> See appendix 1 for the full directory of site-specific practices referred to in the thesis.

<sup>42</sup> Lucy R. Lippard, ‘Notes from a Recent Arrival (1995)’, in *Situation*, ed. by C. Doherty, Documents of Contemporary Art (London: Whitechapel, 2009), p. 157.

performances practices. However, the research has really only just begun to develop and prototype ways of researching between architecture and performance, and the practice-led collaborative form of inquiry only emerged in the third of the three case studies (chapter 8). This research was carried out in collaboration with a performance-maker who shared similar interests and concerns around a particular site and a particular set of critically creative tools. Therefore, perhaps the most direct avenue for further research is the testing (and refining) of this approach and tools in other communities and sites. As discussed in chapter 8, the Port of Sheffield case study was limited by the amount of time and resources that the performance-maker was able to devote to the project and the site, as well as the research and funding timetable. Constraints in terms of time and resource also limited the number of research case studies. It was therefore not feasible to carry out detailed research into three of the models of practice that have been identified in the taxonomy of practice in chapter 5.

These limitations point towards a potential future piece of research linked to the sixth ‘model’ of performance described in 5.1.6 - ‘*Practitioners and Participants: Participating, playing, or enacting futures*’. This model describes an extended engagement with a site or community, perhaps over a several iterations of gathering, storytelling, participatory design or construction, and public performance. In research terms, this type of engagement would require the development of an ongoing relationship between (spatial) researchers and performance-makers, supported by academic institutions and/or external arts funding. In the Lower Don Valley, the E.ON-funded public art programme that emerged out of the demolition of the Tinsley Towers (described in section 8.7) may offer one such opportunity to extend the research by building upon the work already carried out with the Port of Sheffield.

### **9.3.1 Implications for future practice in architecture and urbanism**

The research has been developed around real sites, communities, and modes of practice, as well as drawing upon theoretical, critical, and interdisciplinary readings of performance, mapping, and participation. In doing so, the thesis has attempted to bridge the gulf (in language and understanding) to develop a productive conversation between the disciplines of (site-specific) performance and architecture/ urbanism.

When engaging with a new site or project, built environment professionals (including architects, urbanists, urban planners, and regeneration agencies) consult with a wide range of spatial information and quantitative data. This might include historical maps, land ownership and legal documents, national planning frameworks, local strategies and policies, topographical and geological surveys, and aerial photography. The collection and collation of this data, which is often represented



on traditional-looking maps at predefined scales and formats, is considered a fundamental requirement before any meaningful site analysis or design work can commence. At the same time (or prior to) this site analysis phase, built environment professionals have a duty to engage with local communities to determine how their needs and views might be impacted by future development. Previous research has highlighted the value of carrying out more creative forms of engagement much earlier in the design process – rather than ‘consulting’ the community on proposals only once they have been fully planned, designed, and costed.

This thesis has proposed site-specific performance as playing a role within these two key stages in the design process (mapping and participation) – as a method for communicating the qualitative, embodied, and lived qualities of the site. Of course, performance-as-mapping represents a particular approach and set of tools, which might not be appropriate for every site or context. Performance methods and techniques might be employed in tandem with other (more traditional) engagement methods, mapping tools, and modes of participation. Nonetheless, this thesis has extended previous research in demonstrating how the operations of site-specific performances – looking, listening, guiding, revealing, performing, and witnessing can be highly ‘affective’ – combining the immediate sensory experience of the site and the social act of storytelling. In doing so, performances-makers are able to encourage exploration, build new networks of social interaction, and open ‘fresh eyes’ on the city. The value of bringing the methods and processes of dramaturgy and performance into architectural and urbanist practice, therefore, lies in the current blind spots of architecture; articulating the poly-vocal, open and live/ lived nature of space and place. This methodology requires spatial practitioners to engage with (a) site on a different level – literally in terms of investing time and effort ‘on the ground’ – walking at different times and conditions, talking with people, and picking up on the subtle and ever-changing aspects and sensations of a place. Performance-making also relies on a different set of methods and skillsets such as storytelling and narrative. These methods often challenge the divide between expert and local, between ‘valued’ and ‘forgotten’ spaces, and between top-down political strategies and bottom-up acts of resistance.

As this last point demonstrates, performances ‘as maps’ do not pretend to offer a benign neutrality. The Anfield case study was a demonstration of the way that site-specific practice can work at a number of levels to galvanise existing opposition to demolition and redevelopment that was perceived as imposed from outside (or above), and how it can be used to build support for alternative approaches to community-led regeneration. The way in which participatory forms of arts practice can articulate or amplify previously unheard voices and latent opposition may therefore make uncomfortable listening for both political institutions and built-environment professions,

challenging existing decision-making structures and ways of working.<sup>43</sup> However, if site-specific neighbourhood engagement is carried out according to the best practice and ethical codes (described at the end of section 9.2.2), it can have real value in empowering local people to articulate their needs and aspirations.

How this process might be commissioned and funded is also important to consider. The case studies examined by this thesis all addressed important issues related to regeneration and the built environment but sought or received funding from national or local arts organisations or academic institutions. If site-specific performance practices are to become more integrated into the urban design and planning processes, new funding structures will be required, particularly given the economic pressures and funding cuts that the cultural sector is facing. There may be opportunities to disrupt or divert small funding streams to support these aims from within the existing processes of urban development. On such example is the well-established practice of buying or commissioning of surveys and maps to document the physical, archaeological, geological or ecological assets of a site. In a similar way, planning authorities, developers, and regeneration agencies might commission site-specific performance-makers to collaborate with design teams and the local community to produce alternative forms of mapping. Alternatively, small pots of funding might be created by drawing upon local resources such as the Community Infrastructure Levy. Recent cuts to Local Authority public art budgets notwithstanding, the public art funding that is available to planning authorities and regeneration agencies might be have a more significant 'affect' in the site if directed towards developing bold, participatory, and truly 'site-specific' forms of performance. In this way, public art becomes less about physical interventions or object-making, but more about ways of looking, (inter)acting, and re-framing the existing landscape.

Despite these opportunities, it should be acknowledged that this work is still situated at the fringes of architecture and urbanism, particularly when considering the breadth of commercial activity. As De Carlo suggests, there remains a divide between the language and methods of academic research and those of commercial architectural practice and these two aspects of the field remain as far apart as ever.<sup>44</sup> The area of community participation (explored in chapter 4) is a useful illustration of this divide, where issues of plurality, agency, and unpredictability go against many of the core activities and methods of commercial architectural practice. In this context it is also important to recognise that practitioners of architecture and urbanism are far from being solely responsible for the production of the built environment. Further research and engagement is required to begin to build

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<sup>43</sup> Vaughan Williams, p. 224.

<sup>44</sup> De Carlo, p. 11.

partnerships and shared ground with other fields, including planning and regeneration, if there is any hope of supporting and embedding more meaningful forms of community participation.

The challenges associated with changing entrenched modes of practice, commercial interests, and value-systems are daunting. As it is unlikely that this research (or further work at the margins of the discipline) will be able to resolve this in immediate future, an alternative approach might be to focus attention on pedagogical value of performance and similar creative approaches to mapping sites.

The use of some of these tools and methods is already commonplace in architectural education, perhaps most notably in the use of site-walks and psycho-geographical approaches. However these might be extended by encouraging students from architectural and other built environment fields (urbanism, planning, and regeneration) to take part within contemporary site-specific performance practices or collaborate across the fields of architecture and performance. This will enable students of architecture to further test and refine some of the tools and methods of performance practice, to reflect upon how these methods may change the way that they understand sites local to their educational institution and beyond, and to question how this knowledge might challenge and influence the way in which they understand the processes of mapping and design.

### **9.3.2 The 'hardware' and 'software' of community development**

A range of practices studied over the course of this research have emerged in response to political, social, economic, or spatial inequalities. This was brought into focus in the three case studies, each of which addressed themes of marginalisation and 'market failure' in the context of northern England. In cities across in the UK and beyond, urgent work (both in terms of community action and research) is needed to continue to address the complex social and spatial issues that are either produced or exacerbated by the continuing social inequalities. In the production of the built environment, disparities in social and economic capital are acutely apparent across a number of different issues. This includes the crisis of decent/ affordable housing, sustainability and fuel poverty, responding to the needs of an ageing population participation, and decision-making in local governance.

A further issue highlighted by practitioners in all three case studies was the importance of what performance-maker Britt Jurgensen referred to as the 'hardware' of community development. This term referred to the development of physical resources and spaces to support the 'software' of local engagement, storytelling, and performance events. Cut-backs in local spending have impacted upon communities in many ways including the closure of local facilities, libraries, community spaces, and community development workers. It is within this context that a number of artists, performance-makers, and other creative practitioners have found themselves attempting to occupy

some of the territory left by the withdrawal of the state. Whether through the maintenance and repurposing of existing public facilities (community centres, youth centres, libraries) or through the formation of new culturally-led organisations (Homebaked, Slung Low's HUB), physical resources and spaces have been identified by creative practitioners and performance-makers as playing an important role in somehow consolidating the 'gains' made by 'tactical' creative practices (such as site-specific performance). However, the provision of spaces and facilities is not enough in itself to address complex and entrenched social issues. Both the case-study research and literature review demonstrated the way in which site-specific performance can be employed as a potentially powerful tool to physically and emotionally engage people with the issues raised by social and spatial inequalities – with participants within the site and to audiences beyond. The 'software' of site-specific performance and other grounded forms of practice may not offer any easy or immediate solutions, but what it does offer is an approach towards understanding and drawing out the issues that face a community – in a way that is critical, spatial, and site-specific, while also upholding an understanding of the city that is grounded in an embodied human experience.

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# 1. Blast Theory

## 'A Machine to See With' (2010 -)

**Model: 2 - Participants only: Looking, listening, leaving traces**

**Site(s):** San Jose, Brighton & various cities

**Approx. performance duration / scale:** 90 minutes approx.

**Mode of Travel:** Walking. **Device(s):** Participant's mobile phone

**Practitioner's description of the performance event:**

*A Machine To See With is a piece of 'Locative Cinema' - a film where the participants play the lead role. The fictional dimension of the work is situated in a real city with a real bank. 'As you prepare to rob the bank you are aware that the line between pretend crime and real crime are starting to blur'.*

**Participants' relationship with the performance:**

Participants perform a role within a fictional heist narrative scripted by the performance-makers. Participants do this individually - following a series of recorded instructions and interacting with real-life places, props, and other participants.

**Relationship between performance and site (specificity):**

The piece is adapted specifically for each site - referencing local landmarks and locations. However, within the plot each city or site is principally a backdrop to the action, with the locations (a car park, a pub, a bank) non-specific.

**Critical relationship between performance and the city:**

While the frame of the narrative appropriated the everyday city as a backdrop to the action, the narrative also asked critical questions about participant's relations and interactions with unknown strangers in the city - who may or may not have also been 'performing'.

**Funding arrangements:**

A Machine To See With was a 'Locative Cinema' commission for San Jose, Banff New Media Institute and Sundance New Frontier. The Brighton performance was commissioned by Lighthouse as part of the Brighton Digital Festival. Blast Theory are also supported by ACE as an NPO.

**Performance documentation:** Practitioner's website and photographs.

**RECITE research engagement with the performance:**

First-hand participation in (and reflection on) the Brighton performance (May 2011). Online archive material.

<http://www.blasttheory.co.uk/projects/a-machine-to-see-with/>

## 2. Blast Theory

### **'Rider Spoke' (2007 -)**

**Model: 2 - Participants only: Looking, listening, leaving traces**

**Site(s):** London & various cities

**Approx. performance duration / scale:** 2 hours approx.

**Mode of Travel:** Bike. **Device(s):** Mobile phone / GPS

**Practitioner's description of the performance event:**

*Rider Spoke invites participants to cycle through the streets of the city, equipped with a handheld computer. "You search for a hiding place and record a short message there. And then you search for the hiding places of others."*

**Participants' relationship with the performance:**

As cyclists on a kind-of treasure hunt - guided by a custom GPS interface.

**Relationship between performance and site (specificity):**

The structure of the work itself is 'site-generic'. However, the work encourages people to leave and find stories that reference local sites and past events within the site.

**Critical relationship between performance and the city:**

One of a number of examples of works that aim to document or map the everyday stories and memories of a city. The work overlays a layer of discoverable location-based content, 'enchanted' everyday spaces and encouraging riders to explore and locate the stories of others.

**Funding arrangements:**

The development of the work was sponsored by Trek and was developed in collaboration with the Mixed Reality Lab at University of Nottingham, Sony Net Services and the Fraunhofer Institute as part of the European research project IPerG (Integrated Project on Pervasive Gaming). Ongoing funding to adapt the work for other cities is provided by various digital / performing arts festivals. Blast Theory are also supported by ACE as an NPO.

**Performance documentation:** Practitioner's website and photographs.

**RECITE research engagement with the performance:**

First-hand participation in (and reflection on) the Leeds performance (July 2013). Online archive material.

<http://www.blasttheory.co.uk/projects/rider-spoke/>

### 3. Christian Nold

#### **'Bio Mapping' (2004 -)**

**Model: 5 - Practitioners and Participants: Gathering, sharing, and telling stories**

**Site(s):** Various cities

**Approx. performance duration / scale:** 90 minutes approx.

**Mode of Travel:** Walking, followed by workshops. **Device(s):** Map, custom device (fingertip sweat sensor & GPS)

**Practitioner's description of the performance event:**

*Bio Mapping is a methodology and tool for visualising people's reactions to the city. Participants re-explore their local area with the use of a unique device invented by the artist. This technology records the wearer's 'Galvanic Skin Response', a simple indicator of 'emotional arousal in conjunction with their geographical location'.*

**Participants' relationship with the performance:**

As a group of participants (invited by the artist) in a structured workshop

**Relationship between performance and site (specificity):**

Nold's methodology and tools have been tested in a number of diverse urban contexts with a wide range of participant groups. It is designed to encourage people to engage in a process of emotional reflection upon local places and sites - a process that Nold suggests might not otherwise be possible.

**Critical relationship between performance and the city:**

Developed initially as a participatory / technological art practice, this methodology has since been deployed for community development projects, as well as a consultation method for large scale urban planning and architectural developments. It is of interest to a wide range of political and commercial institutions as a way of 'measuring' emotional response.

**Funding arrangements:**

Engagement in individual sites is supported by local authorities and / or arts festivals.

**Performance documentation:** Photographs, website, and printed / online maps produced for each site. Practitioner's description of the concept and theoretical underpinning the work available to download as an ebook.

**RECITE research engagement with the performance:**

Online archive material. Practitioner's accounts / theorisation and accounts in other academic literature.

<http://www.biomapping.net/>

## 4. Deborah Egan (The Blue Shed) with Martin Hogg & RECITE

**Model: 2 - Participants only: Looking, listening, leaving traces**

**Site(s):** Sheffield - Lower Don Valley

**Approx. performance duration / scale:** 3 miles approx.

**Mode of Travel:** Walking. **Device(s):** Participant's mp3 player/ smartphone & headphones

**Practitioner's description of the performance event:**

*"Drawn from historical research and local voices, the Port of Sheffield tells the story of the Sheffield's East End - the crucible of the city's wealth and history. As you walk along the towpath, the mobile app will trigger GPS-located audio and visuals, revealing some of the personal stories, memories, and music of the Lower Don Valley."*

**Participants' relationship with the performance:**

Participants on a self-directed audio-walk, with audio resources available online and accessible through the participant's mobile phone.

**Relationship between performance and site (specificity):**

The audio-walk was conceived and made specifically for the sites along the canal in the Lower Don Valley, Sheffield. Audio content is drawn from local stories and memories of those who live, work, and play on the canal.

**Critical relationship between performance and the city:**

A work designed to articulate the lost or forgotten stories of the site. See chapter 8 for further details.

**Funding arrangements:**

Funded as part of the University of Sheffield Festival of the Mind. Supported by The Blue Shed, the University of Sheffield and ACE.

**Performance documentation:** Website and audio walk available to access online.

**RECITE research engagement with the performance:**

First-hand participation in the processes of design and production. See chapters 5 & 8 for further details.

*As of July 2014, the domain at <http://www.theportofsheffield.co.uk> ceased to be operational. An archive/ legacy version of the audio-walk web app is available at <http://mapcodebuild.co.uk/PoS>*



## 5. Dries Verhoven

### 'No Man's Land' (2008 -)

**Model: 3- Performers and Participants: Guiding, revealing, and telling stories**

**Site(s):** Utrecht & other cities

**Approx. performance duration / scale:** Unknown

**Mode of Travel:** Walking. **Device(s):** Audio player & headphones

**Practitioner's description of the performance event:**

*"No man's land is a personal stroll through the city with an unknown guide. An experiential performance about the fear of the strange and the need to visibly exist."*

**Participants' relationship with the performance:**

Solo participants are guided on a walk by solo performers and an audio track. Each of the performers is a migrant or refugee, and the tour explores their personal geography of their adopted home.

**Relationship between performance and site (specificity):**

The original concept was developed and written for a specific site, but later adapted and re-performed in other cities and contexts. In each version of the performance, the guides were drawn from a particular local migrant communities. Therefore each performance can be thought of as specific to a physical, social, and political site.

**Critical relationship between performance and the city:**

The work is designed to allow participants to experience the personal / everyday geography of the 'other'. It raises issues of fear, exclusion and inequality in the city, as well as the importance of other spaces and communities for those new to a culture.

**Funding arrangements:**

Supported by / coproduced with a number of different arts festivals including 'Huis en Festival aan de Werf' (2008)

**Performance documentation:** Practitioner's website and photographs.

**RECITE research engagement with the performance:**

Online archive material. Theorisation and accounts in other academic literature.

<http://www.driesverhoeven.com/en/project/no-mans-land>

## 6. ENCOUNTER Productions

### with various writers

#### *'CITY at Sprint Festival' (2013)*

**Model: 2 - Participants only: Looking, listening, leaving traces**

**Site(s):** London - Camden

**Approx. performance duration / scale:** 30mins approx. (per performance)

**Mode of Travel:** Walking. **Device(s):** Participant's mp3 player/ smartphone & headphones

**Practitioner's description of the performance event:**

*"ENCOUNTER invites individual audience members to consider how they fit into the life of the city by taking an invigorating hike through its streets while listening to, on their ipod/smartphone/mp3 player, specially commissioned audio plays."*

**Participants' relationship with the performance:**

Individual or small groups of participants are guided on a walk by a series of pre-recorded audio plays. The plays include navigational instructions within the narrative structure.

**Relationship between performance and site (specificity):**

The audio plays were each commissioned, conceived and written specifically for the sites around the area of Euston in London.

**Critical relationship between performance and the city:**

The plays researched, reimagined, and repurposed local landmarks, spaces and historical monuments. It encouraged participants to explore the public spaces of Euston that might go unnoticed in everyday life.

**Funding arrangements:**

Commissioned by ENCOUNTER as part of the Sprint festival at Camden People's Theatre

**Performance documentation:** Commissioned by ENCOUNTER as part of the Sprint festival at Camden People's Theatre

**RECITE research engagement with the performance:**

First-hand participation in (and reflection on) the London performance (March 2012).

<http://www.encounterproductions.org/CITY>

## 7. Encounters

### **'Encounters Shops' (2003 -)**

**Model: 5 - Practitioners and Participants: Gathering, sharing, and telling stories**

**Site(s):** Sheffield & other cities

**Approx. performance duration / scale:** Directed by individual participants. Some temporary shops have only been open a number of weeks, while others have remained in place for 6 months.

**Mode of Travel:** Static workshops. **Device(s):** Temporary shop

**Practitioner's description of the performance event:**

*Since 2003 Encounters have been taking up residence in disused Shops across the UK. The Shops become 'meeting places in which local communities can collect and exchange experiences, memories, objects, journeys and thoughts about their lives, where they live and the wider world'. Using photography, visual art and text, personal materials from visitors is reflected back through the creation of interactive displays, verbatim performance events and publications.*

**Participants' relationship with the performance:**

Groups and individual participants (from local children and young people through to older adults and passers-by) are invited to take part in creative workshops and activities and contribute to the mapping process.

**Relationship between performance and site (specificity):**

The approach is not specific to a city or site, but responds to and is tailored to the local community. The work encourages people to leave and find stories that reference local sites, events, people and memories from within the site.

**Critical relationship between performance and the city:**

The empty shops work fits within a wider set of community development projects led by artists and performance-makers. Intentions vary from site-to-site but might include: the temporary uplift of the streetscape, building a sense of pride in the local area, helping to construct a positive identity and sense of place, developing social confidence, and building informal networks.

**Funding arrangements:**

Supported / commissioned by a number of different local authorities or community organisations.

**Performance documentation:** Practitioner's website and photographs.

**RECITE research engagement with the performance:**

First-hand participation in activities in the Crucible Sheffield Encounters Shops (2007) and informal discussion with practitioners. Online archive material.

<http://www.encounters-arts.org.uk/index.php/shop/>

## 8. Forced Entertainment

### *'Nights in this City' (1995 (1997))*

**Model: 3- Performers and Participants: Guiding, revealing, and telling stories**

**Site(s):** Sheffield (and subsequently in Rotterdam)

**Approx. performance duration / scale:** 3 hours approx.

**Mode of Travel:** Bus. **Device(s):** n/a

**Practitioner's description of the performance event:**

*"Poetical and mischievous, the project explored the different histories written in urban space — from the official and the historical to the personal, the mythical and the imaginary. The public were bused around a particular route whilst commentary from the performers renamed and re-invented real-world events beyond the window."*

**Participants' relationship with the performance:**

Passengers on a bus tour. Followed by an installation in a warehouse space.

**Relationship between performance and site (specificity):**

Written and developed specifically for Sheffield. The performance was later adapted for Rotterdam.

**Critical relationship between performance and the city:**

By taking participants out to a potentially unfamiliar council estate in Sheffield aimed to unsettle participants. The blurring of fiction, historical accounts, and surprise elements in the work challenged participant's reading of the city, and the sense of how well they knew the place that they lived.

**Funding arrangements:**

Supported by ACE, Yorkshire & Humberside Arts, and Sheffield City Council. Presented in partnership with Sheffield Theatres

**Performance documentation:** Photographs, website. Performance text available to buy online.

**RECITE research engagement with the performance:**

Online archive material. Second-hand accounts / theorisation in academic literature.

<http://www.forcedentertainment.com/page/3069/Nights-in-this-City/121>

## 9. Forest Fringe with various writers

### **'Zero Hour Bus Tours' (2011)**

**Model: 2 - Participants only: Looking, listening, leaving traces**

**Site(s):** London

**Approx. performance duration / scale:** 1 hr approx. (per performance)

**Mode of Travel:** Bus. **Device(s):** Participant's mp3 player/ smartphone & headphones

**Practitioner's description of the performance event:**

*"This is a journey through a ruined landscape. This is rubble and debris and things in dark corners that are probably best not to think about. This is an imagined history or an imagined future. From the top deck you can see all of London as you've never seen it before."*

**Participants' relationship with the performance:**

Participants experienced the work as passengers on the regular N11 night bus service, but were directed to download the audio plays prior to the journey, beginning and ending the plays at specific points along the route.

**Relationship between performance and site (specificity):**

The audio plays were each commissioned, conceived and written specifically for the N11 bus route (Liverpool Street to Kensington). The narrative themes of individual plays varied their degree of site-specificity (one re-envisioned the city as a post-apocalyptic wasteland).

**Critical relationship between performance and the city:**

The audio plays destabilised the familiar (and typically passive) activity of taking a bus in London. The city outside the window became the backdrop to a fiction, further heightened by the timing (late at night) and the blurring of real and staged characters (performers) on the bus itself.

**Funding arrangements:**

Commissioned as part of the InTransit outdoor arts festival in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

**Performance documentation:** Photographs, website.

**RECITE research engagement with the performance:**

First-hand participation in (and reflection on) the London performance (July 2011). Online archive material.

<http://www.forestfringe.co.uk/festivals/2011-festivals/intransit-festival-2011/>

## 10. Friedemann Derschmidt (initiator)

### ***'Permanent Breakfast' (1996-)***

**Model: 6 - Practitioners and Participants: Participating, playing, and enacting futures**

**Site(s):** Vienna and various cities

**Approx. performance duration / scale:** Directed by individual participants.

**Mode of Travel:** n/a. **Device(s):** Breakfasting equipment (food, tables, chairs)

**Practitioner's description of the performance event:**

*"The idea is quite simple and catching: one person invites to breakfast. The invited persons ( usually 4) commit themselves to invite to a public breakfast on the next possible date. And so on... The public breakfast became a kind of cult, and more often people could be seen taking a seat at a beautifully set breakfast table standing on a spare parking space in a parking lot, an empty dysfunctional fountain or in parks or malls."*

**Participants' relationship with the performance:**

As local instigators of a breakfast, or as spectators observing others eating breakfast in public space.

**Relationship between performance and site (specificity):**

The structure of the work itself is generic. However, the work responds to and is shaped by the local sites - including the 'normal use' of the breakfasting space and the socio-political context.

**Critical relationship between performance and the city:**

By challenging the dominant use of public spaces (eg. pavements conceived for pedestrians) by sitting down to eat breakfast, this work is one of a number of examples of simple transgressive / performative gestures . It aims to enact a gently political reclaiming of space, while also entertaining others.

**Funding arrangements:**

Voluntary / unfunded.

**Performance documentation:** Blog with contributions and photographs from various participants.

**RECITE research engagement with the performance:**

Online archive material. Second-hand accounts / theorisation in academic literature.

<http://www.permanentbreakfast.org/>

# 11. Graeme Miller

## 'LINKED' (2003 -)

**Model: 2 - Participants only: Looking, listening, leaving traces**

**Site(s):** M11 Link Road - Hackney Marshes to Redbridge

**Approx. performance duration / scale:** 3 miles approx.

**Mode of Travel:** Walking. **Device(s):** RFID device / insitu speakers

**Practitioner's description of the performance event:**

*"Concealed along the three-mile route, 20 transmitters continually broadcast hidden voices, recorded testimonies and rekindled memories of those who once lived and worked where the motorway now runs. Borrow a receiver and map to explore the streets alongside the road and discover this invisible layer of speech and music reanimating the landscape."*

**Participants' relationship with the performance:**

Participants embark on a self-directed walk to find the audio transmitters.

**Relationship between performance and site (specificity):**

Highly site-specific - created for this site with local people. This focus of the piece was how the site (both social and physical) had been changed by a large-scale infrastructure project.

**Critical relationship between performance and the city:**

The work was developed as a response to the demolition of homes to make way for the M11 infrastructure project. In articulating the stories of those affected by the project, the work encourages its participants to literally stop and think about (and listen to) the lives and homes of those displaced by urban development.

**Funding arrangements:**

An Artsadmin project, commissioned by the Museum of London and part of the Interference Sonic Arts Festival. Additional funding from the Arts Council England, Heritage Lottery Fund, London Boroughs Grants Committee part of the Association of London Government, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and the London Boroughs of Redbridge and Waltham Forest

**Performance documentation:** Website with details of how parts of the walk can still be accessed. Some of the audio transmitters are no longer operational.

**RECITE research engagement with the performance:**

Online archive material. Second-hand accounts / theorisation in academic literature.

<http://www.linkedm11.net/>

## 12. Ilyna Noe

### **'Co-mapping' (2013)**

**Model: 1 - Performer(s) only: Looking, listening, leaving traces**

**Site(s):** Berlin & Kitchener (Canadian city formerly known as New Berlin)

**Approx. performance duration / scale:** Unknown

**Mode of Travel:** Walking. **Device(s):** n/a

**Practitioner's description of the performance event:**

*"A set of experiments in the building of architectures of co-reliance, trust, attentiveness and 'response-ability' via the iterative co-creating of fluid maps of two cities"*

**Participants' relationship with the performance:**

No direct participant involvement

**Relationship between performance and site (specificity):**

The piece involves the development of a set of 'site-generic' embodied mapping techniques.

**Critical relationship between performance and the city:**

A series of experiments to test and challenge dominant modes of (representational) cartography. The work also explores ways of representing the different spatial knowledge of the 'local' and the 'visitor'.

**Funding arrangements:**

Developed during an artist residency at the Zentrum für Kunst und Urbanistik

**Performance documentation:** Practitioner's website with drawings and instructions.

**RECITE research engagement with the performance:**

Online archive material. Presentation by the performance-maker at IFTR conference (Barcelona 2013).

<http://www.ilyanoe.com/co-mapping/>



## 13. Invisible Flock

### *'Bring the Happy' (2011 -)*

**Model: 5 - Practitioners and Participants: Gathering, sharing, and telling stories**

**Site(s):** Leeds and various cities

**Approx. performance duration / scale:** Directed by individual participants. Each temporary shop remains in place for around 4 weeks.

**Mode of Travel:** Static workshops. **Device(s):** Temporary shop / physical map / website

**Practitioner's description of the performance event:**

*"An ongoing large scale project about happiness, at the heart of it is an attempt to map the moments and memories of happiness of the UK and beyond. We will be taking over empty shop units throughout the country and filling them with giant maps of our host cities. We will be asking you to come and visit us and leave us a moment or memory of happiness that has taken place anywhere in your city"*

**Participants' relationship with the performance:**

Public participants are invited to contribute to the mapping process in ad-hoc encounters at the temporary shops or online.

**Relationship between performance and site (specificity):**

The structure of the work itself is 'site-generic'. However, the work encourages people to leave and find stories that reference local sites and past events within the site.

**Critical relationship between performance and the city:**

One of a number of examples of works that aim to map the everyday stories and memories of a city using the frame of happiness. The stories are represented as a visual artefact (the map) and adapted and retold in a musical performance to mark the culmination of engagement within each site.

**Funding arrangements:**

Produced in collaboration with various performance venues. Supported by Arts Council England

**Performance documentation:** Practitioner's website with interactive map and photos.

**RECITE research engagement with the performance:**

Online archive material. Presentation by the performance-maker at the Compass Festival of Live Art (Leeds 2011).

<http://www.invisibleflock.com/bringthehappy/>

## 14. Invisible Flock

### *'The Visitor' (2011)*

**Model: 2 - Participants only: Looking, listening, leaving traces**

**Site(s):** Bradford - City Centre

**Approx. performance duration / scale:** 2 hours approx.

**Mode of Travel:** Walking. **Device(s):** Participant's mobile phone

**Practitioner's description of the performance event:**

*"The Visitor is an interactive artwork that goes beyond the gallery walls and can be experienced directly through your own mobile phone. Armed with your mobile phone and a sense of adventure, you will then travel to locations in the city centre revealing clues that take you from one place to the next."*

**Participants' relationship with the performance:**

Participants embark on a self-directed walk to find successive clues in a treasure hunt structure.

**Relationship between performance and site (specificity):**

The work involved the development of a series of specific challenges and interventions directly embedded within the city.

**Critical relationship between performance and the city:**

A playful way of engaging with the local history and architecture. The culmination of the walk also enabled participants to briefly 're-purpose' the large public display screen in the city centre.

**Funding arrangements:**

Part of the 'Ways of Looking Festival, 2011. Funded by Arts Council England through the National Lottery and Bradford Metropolitan District Council.

**Performance documentation:** Limited online documentation

**RECITE research engagement with the performance:**

First-hand participation in (and reflection upon) the Bradford performance in October 2011.

<http://www.waysoflooking.org/programme/invisible-flock-the-visitor>

## 15. Janet Cardiff

### *'The Missing Voice (Case Study B)' (1999)*

**Model: 2 - Participants only: Looking, listening, leaving traces**

**Site(s):** London -Whitechapel

**Approx. performance duration / scale:** 1 hour approx.

**Mode of Travel:** Walking. **Device(s):** CD / MP3 Player

**Practitioner's description of the performance event:**

*An audio-walk conceived and written as a response to the artist's experience of living in London. The structure of the work combines Cardiff's imagination (or 'stream-of-consciousness') with the paranoid tension associated with detective stories and films.*

**Participants' relationship with the performance:**

Individual participants are guided on a walk by a pre-recorded audio. The audio includes navigational instructions within the narrative structure.

**Relationship between performance and site (specificity):**

The audio walk was commissioned, conceived and written specifically for the sites around the area of Whitechapel, London.

**Critical relationship between performance and the city:**

The Missing Voice "works with connections between the self and the city, between the conscious and unconscious, and between multiple selves and urban footsteps. In so doing, she (Cardiff) directs attention to the significance of dreams and ghostly matters for thinking about the real and imagined spaces of the city."<sup>1</sup>

**Funding arrangements:**

Commissioned by Artangel. Audio equipment maintained by the Whitechapel Gallery.

**Performance documentation:** Practitioner's website with fragments of performance text.

**RECITE research engagement with the performance:**

Online archive material. Practitioner's accounts / theorisation and accounts in other academic literature.

<http://www.cardiffmiller.com/>

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<sup>1</sup> David Pinder, 'Ghostly Footsteps: Voices, Memories and Walks in the City', *Cultural Geographies*, 8 (2001), 1–19.

## 16. Jeanne Van Heeswijk with Britt Jurgensen, Graham Hicks & Debbie

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**Model: 3- Performers and Participants: Guiding, revealing, and telling stories**

**Site(s):** Liverpool - Anfield

**Approx. performance duration / scale:** 90 minutes approx.

**Mode of Travel:** Minibus. **Device(s):** n/a

**Practitioner's description of the performance event:**

*"A heritage tour with guide Carl Ainsworth. Discover places of interest and local landmarks in the Anfield neighbourhood. The tour will explore the past and present of housing politics and the impact that regeneration has had on the local community."*

**Participants' relationship with the performance:**

Part of a group of 20 participants on a minibus tour.

**Relationship between performance and site (specificity):**

Highly site-specific - created for this site with local people in response to the Housing Market Renewal in the area - with content drawn from their experience and performed verbatim.

**Critical relationship between performance and the city:**

This focus of the piece was how the site (both social and physical) had been by a large-scale urban regeneration project. See chapter 7 for further details.

**Funding arrangements:**

Originally commissioned as part of the Liverpool Biennial 2012.

**Performance documentation:** Practitioner's website with photos. Performance text available to download free online.

**RECITE research engagement with the performance:**

First-hand participation and observation. See chapters 5 & 7 for further details.

<http://www.2up2down.org.uk/events/future-event/>

## 17. Matthias Lilienthal

### 'X Homes' (2002 -)

**Model: 3- Performers and Participants: Guiding, revealing, and telling stories**

**Site(s):** São Paulo, Caracas, Istanbul, Berlin, Beirut

**Approx. performance duration / scale:** Unknown

**Mode of Travel:** Walking. **Device(s):** n/a

**Practitioner's description of the performance event:**

*The theatrical concept initiated in 2002 by Matthias Lilienthal deliberately plays with the notion of privacy and the home. Within each home, the participants may encounter installations, scripted performances or be invited to take part in the life of the resident. It is (deliberately) unclear whether the experience is 'real' or 'performed'.*

**Participants' relationship with the performance:**

Pairs of participants are sent on a series of visits to private homes within an urban district. At each home they are invited to participate in or watch a performance.

**Relationship between performance and site (specificity):**

The overarching concept and structure of the work itself is generic. However, the work encourages people to explore spaces and stories that are intimately specific to the site.

**Critical relationship between performance and the city:**

By taking participants into private homes, X Homes aims to unsettle participants. The concept deliberately plays with and blurs fiction, everyday reality, and surprise elements - all within a private space. This aims to challenge participant's reading of the city and their assumptions about the people that live there.

**Funding arrangements:**

Commissioned by a number of different arts festivals and supported by the Goethe Institut.

**Performance documentation:** Limited online documentation

**RECITE research engagement with the performance:**

Online archive material. Practitioner's accounts / theorisation and accounts in other academic literature.

<http://www.goethe.de/uun/bdu/en11199031.htm>

## 18. Mick Knott and others for Cycle Sheffield

### *'Sheffield Friday Night Ride' (2008 -)*

**Model: 3- Performers and Participants: Guiding, revealing, and telling stories**

**Site(s):** Sheffield

**Approx. performance duration / scale:** 3 hours approx.

**Mode of Travel:** Bike. **Device(s):** n/a

**Practitioner's description of the performance event:**

*"Sheffield FridayNightRide is a cycle ride around Sheffield. It's a ride for fun, fresh(ish) air and comradeship. It's unsupported, it's about celebrating cycling and celebrating Sheffield. It's not a demo or a protest. It is a mix of cycling, interest in one's city and being sociable. We have nothing to lose but our chains!"*

**Participants' relationship with the performance:**

Part of a group of cyclists (anywhere in size from 10-50) on a themed / guided tour of Sheffield.

**Relationship between performance and site (specificity):**

The concept was adapted from a group in London. The route of each ride (or performance) is developed around a specific theme, and grounded in local history or culture. Depending on the nature of the theme, the ride leader will use their expertise or local research to add layers of information to the places passed on the ride.

**Critical relationship between performance and the city:**

The SFNR encourages participants to 'become a tourist in their own city', discovering new places, local histories, and creating new networks. The social nature of the rides also challenges utility function associated with urban cycling.

**Funding arrangements:**

Voluntary / unfunded.

**Performance documentation:** Website with a map and details of past rides. A narrative is written by the ride organiser reflecting on each ride. A pin badge (unique to each ride) is created and distributed to each rider to commemorate the ride.

**RECITE research engagement with the performance:**

First-hand participation and observation in a number of rides. Additional information and documentation from the website archive and first-hand conversations with the practitioners.

<http://www.sfnr.org.uk/>

## 19. Morag Rose

### ***'The Loiterers Resistance Movement' (2008 -)***

**Model: 3- Performers and Participants: Guiding, revealing, and telling stories**

**Site(s):** Manchester

**Approx. performance duration / scale:** 1-2 hours approx.

**Mode of Travel:** Walking. **Device(s):** n/a

**Practitioner's description of the performance event:**

*"Using psychogeography as a kinaesthetic, learning tool we blur the boundaries between activism, art and academia and imaginatively (re)map our city according to desires emotions, memories and serendipitous encounters that emerge during the dérive."*

**Participants' relationship with the performance:**

Groups of participants join the artist in a monthly psychogeographic walk (or 'wander') around Manchester.

**Relationship between performance and site (specificity):**

While psychogeographic techniques are not specific to any particular site, the route of each wander is determined by the make up of the group and the chance encounters that might happen at any that particular time and place. Other LRM events might be developed around a more specific urban themes, and may be grounded in local history or culture.

**Critical relationship between performance and the city:**

Like many other examples, the role of this type of practice is to critique or challenge the dominant (commercial) uses inscribed on the city, and to offer participants a different way of thinking about how they interact with urban space.

**Funding arrangements:**

Voluntary / unfunded.

**Performance documentation:** Practitioner's blog

**RECITE research engagement with the performance:**

First-hand participation and observation on an LRM walk. Additional information from [http://walkingencyclopaedia.blogspot.co.uk/2014/03/the-walking-encyclopaedias-walking\\_792.html](http://walkingencyclopaedia.blogspot.co.uk/2014/03/the-walking-encyclopaedias-walking_792.html)

<http://nowhere-fest.blogspot.co.uk>

## 20. Probiscus

### **'Urban Tapestries' (2002-2004)**

**Model: 5 - Practitioners and Participants: Gathering, sharing / telling (stories)**

**Site(s):** London (various communities / sites)

**Approx. performance duration / scale:** n/a

**Mode of Travel:** Walking / workshops. **Device(s):** A mobile phone / PDA with custom-built mapping software

**Practitioner's description of the performance event:**

*To demonstrate the initial prototype of the Urban Tapestries public authoring platform, Proboscis ran a number of trials to develop the platform. This was followed up by a subsequent project (Social Tapestries) that engaged with a number of specific communities in London.*

**Participants' relationship with the performance:**

Public participants were invited to contribute to the mapping process in a trial.

**Relationship between performance and site (specificity):**

Probiscus' methodology and tools have been tested in a number of urban community contexts with a range of participant groups. It is designed to encourage people to engage in an active process of authoring one's local environment and being part of a network of local experiences.

**Critical relationship between performance and the city:**

The prototype project enabled participants to "annotate ephemeral traces of peoples' presence in the geography of the city." It anticipated the subsequent growth in geo-tagged social media and mobile communication.

**Funding arrangements:**

A Probiscus / SoMa Research project in partnership with the London School of Economics, Hewlett Packard Research Labs and Orange with Ordnance Survey and France Telecom R&D.

**Performance documentation:** Practitioner's website and report.

**RECITE research engagement with the performance:**

Online archive material.

<http://research.urbantapestries.net/>



## 21. Public Works

### **'FOLKESTONOMY' (2008)**

**Model: 5 - Practitioners and Participants: Gathering, sharing, and telling stories**

**Site(s):** Folkestone

**Approx. performance duration / scale:** n/a

**Mode of Travel:** Static workshops. **Device(s):** A specially converted milk float and road signs.

**Practitioner's description of the performance event:**

*"A mobile mapping station was travelling, parking and collecting data across different public spaces in Folkestone throughout the summer 2008, in order to trace and visualise existing cultural spaces, interests and links."*

**Participants' relationship with the performance:**

Public participants were invited to contribute to the mapping process in ad-hoc workshops held by the practitioners once the float had parked up.

**Relationship between performance and site (specificity):**

This form of mobile mapping tool has been adapted by public works from other contexts. However the float and mapping software were developed specifically for this project.

**Critical relationship between performance and the city:**

FOLKESTONOMY aimed to visualise the actors and (social) networks involved in the production of cultural spaces in the town that are linked to the production of the Triennial. The practitioners suggest that the process of visualising the cultural-spatial knowledge and networks generated through the Triennial may help to 'influence future cultural thinking and planning on an urban scale'.

**Funding arrangements:**

Commissioned as part of the Folkestone Triennial

**Performance documentation:** Website with interactive map and photos.

**RECITE research engagement with the performance:**

Online archive material.

<http://www.publicworksgroup.net/projects/folkestonomy>

## 22. Raumlabor

### **'EichbaumOper' (2008-2009)**

**Model: 6 - Practitioners and Participants: Participating, playing, and enacting futures**

**Site(s):** Eichbaum, Ruhr Valley

**Approx. performance duration / scale:** 6 weeks approx.

**Mode of Travel:** n/a. **Device(s):** A converted metro station

**Practitioner's description of the performance event:**

*"Eichbaumoper characterises the temporary transformation of the metro station Eichbaum into an opera house... (this) stands out as an architectural symbol of reactivation and transformation and offers workshop space, conference room, bar, cinema, art gallery, meeting place, reading café, etc. The invited composers, librettists and local residents formed the opera. In addition to the local peoples stories, the noise of the highway, the rhythm of the passing metro and the inhospitable spaces became the formative part of the Eichbaumoper."*

**Participants' relationship with the performance:**

Local participants were invited to become involved in the creation of stories and a site-specific opera. Public participants were then invited to watch the production of the opera.

**Relationship between performance and site (specificity):**

The project was an imaginative site-specific response to a unique spatial and social context. It addressed its location at a transport intersection in a playful way, yet was tied in to the broader site of the Ruhr industrial region. The use of local narratives and the formation of new social networks as part of the project tied this further into its social site.

**Critical relationship between performance and the city:**

EichbaumOper was conceived as a playful way of creating a new narrative for a vandalised and unloved interchange and its surrounding community through a combination of architectural intervention and live performance. It also sought to challenge the distinction between 'high art' of the opera and the everyday (both stories and surroundings).

**Funding arrangements:**

Created in collaboration with Schauspiel Essen, Ringlokschuppen Mülheim, and Musiktheater im Revier Gelsenkirchen

**Performance documentation:** Practitioner's website and photographs.

**RECITE research engagement with the performance:**

Online archive material. Presentation by the performance-maker at SSoA.

<http://raumlabor.net/eichbaumoper/>

## 23. Rebar

### **'Park(ing) day' (2005-)**

**Model: 6 - Practitioners and Participants: Participating, playing, and enacting futures**

**Site(s):** San Francisco and various cities

**Approx. performance duration / scale:** Directed by individual participants.

**Mode of Travel:** n/a. **Device(s):** A metered city-centre parking space

**Practitioner's description of the performance event:**

*Conceived in 2005, PARK(ing) Day is now an annual "open-source global event where citizens, artists and activists collaborate to temporarily transform metered parking spaces into 'PARK(ing)' spaces: temporary public places."*

**Participants' relationship with the performance:**

Local initiators encouraged to create their own park(ing) interventions.

**Relationship between performance and site (specificity):**

A site-generic and 'open-source' concept that can be performed in any urban (on-street) parking space (subject to local by-laws).

**Critical relationship between performance and the city:**

The Park(ing) day project aims to critique or challenge the dominant use of car parking spaces within city centres, using the tactical and performative use of space to propose different ways of using urban (public) space.

**Funding arrangements:**

Voluntary / unfunded.

**Performance documentation:** Website with maps and photographs and guidelines.

**RECITE research engagement with the performance:**

Online archive material. First-hand observation of Park(ing) day interventions in Sheffield, UK

<http://parkingday.org/>

## 24. Rimini Protokoll

### *'50 Kilometres of Files' (2013)*

**Model: 2 - Participants only: Looking, listening, leaving traces**

**Site(s):** Berlin

**Approx. performance duration / scale:** Directed by individual participants.

**Mode of Travel:** Walking. **Device(s):** Participant's smartphone & headphones

**Practitioner's description of the performance event:**

*"Rimini Protokoll haul the Stasi files out of the archives and into the city's present: About a hundred people in Berlin's Mitte district are surveyed and for the microphone recollect or reconstruct observations of the sites where the misdeeds were perpetrated... Using GPS phones, the visitors on foot become 'insiders', entering into history."*

**Participants' relationship with the performance:**

Participants on a self-directed audio-walk, with audio resources available online and accessible through the participant's mobile phone.

**Relationship between performance and site (specificity):**

The audio-walk was conceived and produced from the archive material and interviews that relate to specific sites in Berlin Mitte.

**Critical relationship between performance and the city:**

The performance-makers describe the work as a 'strange picture-puzzle' for participants, challenging or blurring the distinction between current life (and contemporary politics) and the surveillance state portrayed in the original archive recordings.

**Funding arrangements:**

Funded by the Governing Mayor of Berlin – Senate Chancellery - Cultural Affairs- and the Federal Commissioner for Cultural and Media Affairs.

**Performance documentation:** Practitioner's website and photographs.

**RECITE research engagement with the performance:**

Online archive material. Presentation by the performance-maker at the 'Performance Possibility Place' symposium (Leeds, 2014)

[http://www.rimini-protokoll.de/website/en/project\\_4969.html](http://www.rimini-protokoll.de/website/en/project_4969.html)

## 25. Rimini Protokoll

### 'Cargo Sofia-X' (2006-)

**Model: 3- Performers and Participants: Guiding, revealing, and telling stories**

**Site(s):** Sofia

**Approx. performance duration / scale:** 2 hours approx.

**Mode of Travel:** Truck. **Device(s):** A specially converted truck

**Practitioner's description of the performance event:**

*"Where goods used to be stacked in the past, now the audience is sitting and looking from a changed perspective back to their city. Thus the truck serves as an observatory, a theatre probe, a mobile binocular trained at the cities like a microscope. The audience includes 45 people from the city visited by the truck, invited to come to a central venue – in front of a theatre, a festival hall or a museum - and transferred for two hours from there to a roadside fast food restaurant, cargo handling ramps, warehouses or border checkpoints... On the road cordless microphones will transmit their mobile biographies live into the truck."*

**Participants' relationship with the performance:**

Participants invited to join the event as 'cargo' (passengers) within the converted truck.

**Relationship between performance and site (specificity):**

A site-generic concept that is adapted for different cities / sites.

**Critical relationship between performance and the city:**

Described as a 'live spatial model' or 'laboratory', the work transports audience as cargo to explore marginal urban sites and stories. The work is also full of wit (or cynicism?) about the boundaries of contemporary theatre or performance, and the relationship between a theatrical audience and the city.

**Funding arrangements:**

Unknown

**Performance documentation:** Practitioner's website and photographs.

**RECITE research engagement with the performance:**

Online archive material. Presentation by the performance-maker at the 'Performance Possibility Place' symposium (Leeds, 2014)

[http://www.rimini-protokoll.de/website/en/project\\_108.html](http://www.rimini-protokoll.de/website/en/project_108.html)

## 26. Ruth Catlow (Furtherfield) with Mary Flanagan

**Model: 6 - Practitioners and Participants: Participating, playing, and enacting futures**

**Site(s):** Southend

**Approx. performance duration / scale:** n/a

**Mode of Travel:** Static workshops. **Device(s):** Website, open-source platform game-making software

**Practitioner's description of the performance event:**

*"People create their own game level, by making a drawing of place in the town. Then they think about how it could be changed for the better. They devise their own rules, drawing obstacles and rewards; building and sharing game level after level for an epic play session."*

**Participants' relationship with the performance:**

Participants primarily encountered the work through public workshops in schools, community groups, and at local events. A secondary level of participants can participate in the work by playing the game levels online.

**Relationship between performance and site (specificity):**

The work was developed specifically with and for the residents of Southend. However the nature of the software and engagement strategy is site-generic, and can adapted for other cities and sites.

**Critical relationship between performance and the city:**

Play Southend draws upon open-source participatory techniques to develop a 'collective vision' of Southend created by its communities. It encourages local people (particularly young people) to think about the future of their town through drawing and gaming. It has been created in response to conversations around participation in urban planning and regeneration.

**Funding arrangements:**

Commissioned and supported by Arts Council England, Metal (charity arts organisation based in Liverpool / Southend), and the Local Authority.

**Performance documentation:** Website with blog / photographs and interactive platform games created by participants.

**RECITE research engagement with the performance:**

First-hand conversation / interview with performance-makers and observation of workshops at Metal Southend event, 2013.

<http://playsouthend.co.uk/>

## 27. Shawn Micallef, James Roussel & Gabe Sawhney

*'[murmur]'* (2003 -)

**Model: 2 - Participants only: Looking, listening, leaving traces**

**Site(s):** Toronto & various cities

**Approx. performance duration / scale:** Directed by individual participants.

**Mode of Travel:** n/a. **Device(s):** Mobile phone

**Practitioner's description of the performance event:**

*Murmur is an first-person stories and memories related to particular urban locations, as told by people with a personal connection to the story material.*

**Participants' relationship with the performance:**

Participants were members of the public who became aware of the installations through publicity or word-of-mouth. Participants accessed the artwork through regular telephone boxes.

**Relationship between performance and site (specificity):**

While the Murmur concept and signage is site-generic (and appears as a generic piece of urban street signage), the stories recorded for each particular site were chosen for their site-specificity.

**Critical relationship between performance and the city:**

One of a number of practices to adopt storytelling as a way of articulating everyday experience. The practitioners describe the way in which this oral histories approach or 'history from the ground up' gives a platform to voices that are often overlooked in official versions of a city's history.

**Funding arrangements:**

Unknown

**Performance documentation:** Practitioner's website

**RECITE research engagement with the performance:**

Online archive material. Practitioner's accounts / theorisation and accounts in other academic literature.

<http://murmur.ca>

## 28. Slung Low

### **'Knowledge Emporium' (2010-)**

**Model: 5 - Practitioners and Participants: Gathering, sharing, and telling stories**

**Site(s):** Doncaster & various towns / cities

**Approx. performance duration / scale:** Directed by individual participants.

**Mode of Travel:** Static workshops. **Device(s):** A caravan temporarily converted into a sweetshop

**Practitioner's description of the performance event:**

*"The Knowledge Emporium is a sweetshop with one big difference: it doesn't take money. It trades sweets for knowledge- your knowledge, your stories, your recipes or anecdotes or beliefs for sweets."*

**Participants' relationship with the performance:**

Public participants are invited to engage with the caravan and performers at pre-determined sites, with an invitation to contribute stories and local knowledge in exchange for sweets.

**Relationship between performance and site (specificity):**

The structure of the project is 'site-generic'. However, the performance-makers encourage people to leave stories and knowledge that reference local sites and past events within the site.

**Critical relationship between performance and the city:**

One of a number of examples of works that aim to document or map the everyday stories and memories of a city. Slung Low typically set up and occupy prominent public spaces, often bringing a new function into spaces dominated by commercial or retail uses. This work therefore also explores and tests ideas around economy, exchange, and the valuing of local knowledge.

**Funding arrangements:**

Commissioned by a number of different arts festivals and local authorities.

**Performance documentation:** Photographs, website.

**RECITE research engagement with the performance:**

Online archive material and first-hand conversation / interview with performance-makers.

<http://slunglow.macmate.me/Archive/styled-14/index.html>



## 29. Slung Low

### ***'Mapping the City' (2011)***

**Model: 4 - Performers and Participants: Performing, witnessing, and (re)framing places**

**Site(s):** Hull - Fruit Market

**Approx. performance duration / scale:** 3 hours approx.

**Mode of Travel:** Walking, bus, taxi. **Device(s):** Wireless headphones (linked to live actors and soundtrack)

**Practitioner's description of the performance event:**

*"The audience were led on a journey through the city from train station to sea. A woman leapt from the top of the building, characters disappeared on speed boats into the dark sea and everyone took a ride on a bus from 80 years ago. It was about time and how we remember people and why we stay in a place, or leave that place."*

**Participants' relationship with the performance:**

Individual participants follow live performers around the city, linked up to the performer's microphones and a soundtrack via wireless headphones.

**Relationship between performance and site (specificity):**

Written and developed specifically for Hull. The performance-makers discussed the possibility of adapting the performance model for other cities.

**Critical relationship between performance and the city:**

See chapter 6 for further details.

**Funding arrangements:**

One-off commission by iMove as part of the Cultural Olympiad in Yorkshire and the Humber

**Performance documentation:** Photographs, website. Substantial local press coverage.

**RECITE research engagement with the performance:**

First-hand participation and observation. See chapters 5 & 6 for further details.

<http://slunglow.macmate.me/Archive/styled-11/index.html>

## 30. Stealth.Unlimited

*'(Dis)assembled' (2011)*

**Model: 6 - Practitioners and Participants: Participating, playing, and enacting futures**

**Site(s):** Gothenburg

**Approx. performance duration / scale:** Directed by individual participants.

**Mode of Travel:** Static workshops. **Device(s):** A warehouse of building materials

**Practitioner's description of the performance event:**

*"(Dis)assembled lays out the possibility to take the making of the city into our hands – as a common effort. A large collection of materials and tools, laid on the floor of Röda Sten Konsthall's main hall, are brought to life on the not-yet-planned outdoors terrain – through the action and imagination of visitors and neighbours – to give it a future direction."*

**Participants' relationship with the performance:**

Public participants invited to engage in construction workshops over a 12-week period.

**Relationship between performance and site (specificity):**

The structure of the project is 'site-generic'. The practitioners suggest that the individual constructions built by participants over the course of the project (such as a skate ramp) reflect the needs and desires of the local community.

**Critical relationship between performance and the city:**

A direct and playful way of encouraging participants to take the production of the city into their own hands. New ideas about what the city 'needed' emerged collaboratively and communally, and could be tested at real-life functioning scale. The development of these ideas interdependent with the learning of new construction techniques and an understanding of the materials provided.

**Funding arrangements:**

Developed in partnership with Röda Sten Art Centre, Gothenburg.

**Performance documentation:** Photographs, website.

**RECITE research engagement with the performance:**

Online archive material. Presentation by the performance-maker at SSoA (Sheffield, 2012)

<http://www.stealth.ulld.net>

# 31. Stephen Hodge and Kaleider

## ***'Where to build the walls that protect us'*** **(2013)**

**Model: 6 - Practitioners and Participants: Participating, playing / enacting (futures)**

**Site(s):** Exeter

**Approx. performance duration / scale:** 4-6 hrs

**Mode of Travel:** Static workshops. **Device(s):** Scale models

**Practitioner's description of the performance event:**

*"Where to Build the Walls That Protect Us is an opportunity for us all to imagine a future city. Our city of Exeter... An architect or planner might call this sort of process a 'charrette' – a term that's used to describe an intensive and collaborative enquiry that seeks to solve a complex design issue... but you should be assured that this is going to be an exercise in serious play."*

**Participants' relationship with the performance:**

Public participants were invited to engage in a series of 4 workshops ('excursions') that combined walking, storytelling, data gathering, and discussions with local residents and other 'experts' in urban development.

**Relationship between performance and site (specificity):**

Conceived and produced specifically for the city of Exeter. This is one of a number of examples of site-specific works that has produced by a performance-maker with a strong connections to their own home town or locality.

**Critical relationship between performance and the city:**

Where to Build the Walls That Protect Us encourages local people to consider about the future of their town using creative activities such as mapping and modelling. The work draws upon the tools, techniques, and activities associated with a scientific analysis and urban planning, but begins to blur these by inviting along public participants and encouraging modes of play and performance.

**Funding arrangements:**

Commissioned by Kaleider. Supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England.

**Performance documentation:** Photographs, website.

**RECITE research engagement with the performance:**

Online archive material.

<http://kaleider.com/projects/where-to-build-the-walls-that-protect-us/>

## 32. Teching Hsieh

### **'One Year Performance' (1981-1982)**

**Model: 1 - Performer(s) only:** Looking, listening, leaving traces

**Site(s):** New York

**Approx. performance duration / scale:** 1 year

**Mode of Travel:** Walking. **Device(s):** n/a

**Practitioner's description of the performance event:**

*"I, Teching Hsieh, plan to do a one year performance piece. I shall stay OUTDOORS for one year, never go inside. I shall not go in to a building, subway, train, car, airplane, ship, cave, tent. I shall have a sleeping bag. The performance shall begin on September 26, 1981 at 2P.M. and continue until September 26, 1982 at 2P.M."*

**Participants' relationship with the performance:**

Public 'participants' encountered the performance through impromptu interactions with the artist the street. Hsieh also used posters to invite public participants to meet him a specified times during the performance.

**Relationship between performance and site (specificity):**

Many of Hsieh's performances seem to deliberately invoke a sense of placelessness and the structure of the could potentially be executed in any city. However the daily performance and 'durational' experience builds up a detailed layering of understanding of the specific place (New York), and the work arguably becomes progressively site-specific.

**Critical relationship between performance and the city:**

In carefully documenting / mapping his durational performances (through a map made each day of where he walked and slept) Hsieh invites the viewer to re imagine his experience, and what it means to inhabit a place without shelter. Taken individually, each of his maps appears not dissimilar in nature to the route or trace of an urban walk. However, taken as a series they become loaded with a sense of duration (and suffering).

**Funding arrangements:** Unknown

**Performance documentation:** Artist's 'statement' (contract), photograph and poster available online. Daily maps (extracts published in Heathfield and Hsieh (2009)).

**RECITE research engagement with the performance:**

Online archive material. Practitioner's accounts / theorisation and accounts in other academic literature. See Heathfield and Hsieh (2009).

<http://www.tehchinghsieh.com/>

## 33. Uninvited Guests with Circumstance

### ***'Give Me Back My Broken Night' (2013)***

**Model: 3- Performers and Participants: Guiding, revealing, and telling stories**

**Site(s):** Bristol - Temple Quarter (and other cities / sites)

**Approx. performance duration / scale:** Unknown

**Mode of Travel:** Walking. **Device(s):** MP3 Player

**Practitioner's description of the performance event:**

*"Walk through vacant lots and buildings under construction and share what is planned for the area known as Bristol Temple Quarter (an exciting, new business development covering 70 hectares in the centre of Bristol) and what the utopian and dystopian alternatives might be. Before your eyes, a glowing vision of the future will appear, the collective imagining of all those participating."*

**Participants' relationship with the performance:**

Participants took part in a walking tour guided by an audio feed. They were then connected live to an illustrator, who visualised their proposals for sites in the city using a mini projector. Finally, participants took part in a semi-fictional planning workshop.

**Relationship between performance and site (specificity):**

Originally developed for Soho, London (2010) but expanded and redeveloped specifically for Bristol Temple Quarter. The technology and approach is somewhat generic in nature, and leant itself to be used in many contexts. The tour was later adapted for other sites and cities.

**Critical relationship between performance and the city:**

The work exploits a novel technology and enables participants to interact with the process of producing the city. New ideas about what the city 'needed' emerged in collaboration with other participants, the projected drawing, the illustrator, and the site itself. The work is also in part a response to the 'dry' methods of participation typically employed in urban planning and regeneration.

**Funding arrangements:**

The work is part of a series of Bristol Temple Quarter commissions coordinated by Watershed, Knowle West Media Centre and MAYK, with support from Bristol City Council and ACE.

**Performance documentation:** Photographs, website.

**RECITE research engagement with the performance:**

Online archive material. Presentation by the performance-maker at IFTR conference (Barcelona 2013).

<http://www.watershed.co.uk/whatson/4045/give-me-back-my-broken-night>

## 34. Wilson and Wilson

### *'Mapping the Edge' (2001)*

**Model: 4 - Performers and Participants: Performing, witnessing, and (re)framing places**

**Site(s):** Sheffield

**Approx. performance duration / scale:** Unknown

**Mode of Travel:** Walking, bus, tram. **Device(s):** n/a

**Practitioner's description of the performance event:**

*"Mapping the Edge took intimate audiences of 33 people out into the streets of Sheffield and led them on an epic journey through the city. Audiences travelled on foot, on a bus and on a tram, as three interlinked stories unfolded around them."*

**Participants' relationship with the performance:**

Spectator-participants watch (witness) and follow the performance through the city.

**Relationship between performance and site (specificity):**

The performance was commissioned, conceived and written specifically for Sheffield. The performance-makers worked closely with a diverse range of local residents to develop stories and locations for the performance.

**Critical relationship between performance and the city:**

Working with local groups and communities that are perhaps rarely heard in the mainstream narrative of the city, the performance-makers took participants on a journey through the places and lives of others. This idea of 'uncovering' of hidden layers of the city is a feature of several of the examples of narrative-based site-specific performance.

**Funding arrangements:**

Produced in collaboration with Sheffield Theatres, and supported by Arts Council England.

**Performance documentation:** Photographs, website.

**RECITE research engagement with the performance:**

Online archive material.

<http://www.wilsonandwilson.org.uk/>

## 35. Wrights and Sites

### **'An Exeter Mis-guide' (2003)**

**Model: 2 - Participants only: Looking, listening, leaving traces**

**Site(s):** Exeter

**Approx. performance duration / scale:** Directed by individual participants.

**Mode of Travel:** Walking. **Device(s):** Guide book

**Practitioner's description of the performance event:**

*"An Exeter Mis-Guide takes the form of a guide book. It suggests a series of walks and points of observation and contemplation within the city of Exeter. It is no ordinary guide book. It is guided by the practice of mytho-geography, which places the fictional, fanciful, fragile and personal on equal terms with 'factual', municipal history. Author and walker become partners in ascribing significance to place."*

**Participants' relationship with the performance:**

Participants engage with the work by buying a mis-guide and following the activities / instructions.

**Relationship between performance and site (specificity):**

The mis-guide was originally conceived and developed specifically for Exeter. It references local sites, spaces and encounters, with many of the walks created in collaboration with local residents of Exeter. The concept has subsequently been adapted for other cities. The performance-makers have played on the idea of a 'site-generic' adaptation of the work by creating a 'Mis-guide to Anywhere' - providing a set of instructions for performative engagement with any urban environment.

**Critical relationship between performance and the city:**

The work seeks to challenge the role of the guidebook (one that directs everyone to the same well-trodden heritage sites and commercial spaces). It encourages participants to re-engage with the hidden, unusual, everyday or spaces of the city by engaging through the senses and bodily performance.

**Funding arrangements:**

Previously published and for sale. Excerpts from the guide are still available online.

**Performance documentation:** Photographs, website.

**RECITE research engagement with the performance:**

Online archive material and presentation by the performance-makers at the 2013 IFTR conference.

<http://www.mis-guide.com/mg/mgexetermain.html>

## 36. Wrights and Sites

***'Everything you need to build a town is here'***  
**(2010)**

**Model: 2 - Participants only: Looking, listening, leaving traces**

**Site(s):** Weston-Super-Mare

**Approx. performance duration / scale:** Directed by individual participants.

**Mode of Travel:** Walking. **Device(s):** Map / signs

**Practitioner's description of the performance event:**

*"A constellation of 41 signs that each engage with their immediate vicinity... Each of the signs refers to aspects of architecture in Weston-super-Mare – whether grand, municipal, amateur, accidental, forgotten, part-demolished or imagined – and contains a carefully worded instruction, observation or comment, designed to encourage the reader to think again about its specific location, to conduct an action or thought experiment."*

**Participants' relationship with the performance:**

Engagement with the signs can take place as participants deliberately seek them out (via a map), or through unplanned everyday encounters. This might happen within the town's public spaces as well as banal urban spaces such as bus stops.

**Relationship between performance and site (specificity):**

The project was designed and developed specifically for Weston-super-Mare, with the instructions for each particular site are site-specific, and reference local history, architecture, and culture.

**Critical relationship between performance and the city:**

While the 41 interventions deliberately mimics the 'generic' signage (such as the historical blue plaque), they encourage participants to engage in performative activities and different ways of using urban (public) space.

**Funding arrangements:**

Commissioned as part of Wonders of Weston festival and supported by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE)

**Performance documentation:** Festival website with photographs, text, and map of the signs.

**RECITE research engagement with the performance:**

Online archive material and first-hand discussions with the performance-makers.

<http://www.wondersofweston.org/artworks/everything-you-need-build-town-here>







## **Appendix 2: Research methods and data collection – Supporting Information**

### **Practitioner interviews**

A semi-structured format was selected for interviewing key practitioners involved in the creation of the case-study performances. The identification of these individuals within each case depended on the way in which each project was structured. Typically the identification of these key informants came out of the initial process of negotiating access. The list of interviewees for each case typically included the artistic director and/or producer of the performance. However given the diverse nature of contemporary forms of site-specific performance such clearly defined roles did not always exist. Engagement on the site of the project; either through participant observation or other interviews, led to further interviews with practitioners and other professional figures identified as important to the development of the project, such as local council or regeneration officials.

### **Interview scheduling**

The schedules for practitioner interviews could be broadly divided into three forms of questioning. The first focused on a series of open questions related to the specific performance project and similar recent projects and was designed to provide background / contextual information about the project, but also to open up the discussion around current practice and the themes and issues that they perceived to be important. The second phase introduced theory-driven questions that were derived principally from the literature review and related to issues such as mapping, documentation, participation, and the instrumentalisation of performance. The precise combination and form of these questions was dependent on the background of the interviewee (e.g. a technical producer or an artistic director). This form of questioning is designed to draw out and articulate the implicit knowledge and views of the interviewees in relation to site-specific performance.<sup>1</sup> The interviews concluded with a third phase, which responds to the theories and views that have been presented by the interviewee and relates them back to the context of the current project. This third phase might include 'confrontational questions', designed to critically challenge or examine the notions in relation to other competing theories (for instance the significance of methods of evaluation in performance).

The format of a typical interview schedule was piloted before the commencement of interviews with academic staff at the University of Sheffield who had a background in theatre and performance

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<sup>1</sup> Uwe Flick, *An Introduction to Qualitative Research* (SAGE, 2009), p. 156.

studies. Although brief, this piloting process was important in terms of preparation for conducting interviews with professionals from outside of my field (i.e. performance-makers).

### **Interview structure and format**

The timing and setting of these interviews was also important; wherever possible the aim was to interview early on in the process (before the live performance), and in the context of the site. There were a number of reasons for the preference of interviewing 'on site'. As a spatial practice, site-specific performances have an immediate physical and strong conceptual relationship with the spaces within which they are designed, made and performed. Interviewing on site (or in a convenient quiet location near to site) had advantages in terms of having immediate spatial reference points; interviewees could make direct visual references to places and people. The time immediately before and after the interview might also be spent engaging in a short guided tour of part of the site; providing further contextual information and insight. However, time and geographic constraints meant that this was not always possible, with some interviews were held at University offices.

All interviews were conducted face-to-face and were designed to last between 45-60 minutes, (although this became extended to around 90 minutes in certain cases). All interviews were digitally recorded (using digital dictaphone or iPhone app), and transcribed within a week (5 working days) of the interview taking place. Interview transcriptions were shared with participants prior to any analysis – so they could make clarifications or remove any sensitive information. This clarification process was built into the research design as part of the original ethics application. While this opened up the possibility of interviewees editing out significant information, it was important as part of building up a mutual trust, and fed into the wider principles of a participatory research agenda. Interview transcripts from the empirical case-study research are included in appendix 3.

### **Participant-observation**

The use of participant observation or other ethnographic methods might easily be confused with 'performance ethnography', the concept introduced by Conquergood in relation to using performance and performativity to understand everyday behaviours.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, Conquergood's proposition that ethnographic field-work 'privileges the body as a site of knowing' is relevant to the study of the practices and processes that underpin the performance event.<sup>3</sup> Ethnographic methods have been employed by performance scholars to observe and document the performance as a

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<sup>2</sup> Dwight Conquergood, 'Rethinking Ethnography: Towards a Critical Cultural Politics', *Communication Monographs*, 58 (1991), 179–94.

<sup>3</sup> Conquergood, p. 180.

complex set of human relations and processes of design and production.<sup>4</sup> In the context of site-specific performance, this involves the observation of activities that precede and support the performance event, including (where possible) the stages of conception, production, and rehearsal.

Participant observation can also be employed during the live event itself, which might include other participants, performers, and incidental public observers. However there is also a danger here - by directing attention to the movements and responses of others, the researcher may affect the way that they experience and document the performance as a participant. One way of addressing this within the methodology is to participate in a live performance on more than one occasion, shifting the role from participant-as-observer to observer-as-participant.

The levels of participant observation employed in this study have been highly dependent on access and collaborative arrangements, which differed between the cases. More details on how participant-observation was employed 'on the ground' are provided within the individual case studies.

### **Participant experience**

In order to build up a multi-dimensional picture of the way a performance impacts on its site and participants, an early decision was made in the development of the research design include to the qualitative/ descriptive reflections of individual participants. Chapter 2 introduced the idea of the individual participant as central to the meaning-making process in site-specific performance and how the sensory immersion of site-specific practice makes this meaning-making process particularly potent. Performance scholars such as McAuley and Reason have called for the use of an experiential research methodology to document this process of meaning-making.<sup>5</sup> This is typically carried out immediately after the performance, but may also be followed up in the days and weeks after the performance.

A number of qualitative data collection methods have been used by researchers in the fields of audience/ reception studies and other arts organisations to document participant/ audience experience of live performance. The advantages and disadvantages of the most commonly used methods – which are well-established in qualitative research across the social sciences – are detailed in table 1. This draws upon recent work by the New Economics Foundation on 'Capturing the Audience Experience'.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> McAuley, *Space in Performance*, p. 15; Atkinson.

<sup>5</sup> McAuley, *Space in Performance*, p. 16.

<sup>6</sup> nef, 'Capturing the Audience Experience: A Handbook for the Theatre', 2010 <<http://www.itc-arts.org/uploaded/documents/Theatre%20handbook.pdf>> [accessed 11 July 2013].

Method	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>One-on-one interviews (face-to-face or via the telephone)</b>	The format of interviews can range from highly structured to more open or conversational in structure. Perhaps most useful in performance research is a middle-ground approach, often referred to as <i>semi-structured</i> interviews. <sup>7</sup> This approach uses a set of core questions that can be adapted by the interviewer to explore the interviewee's opinions in greater depth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If conducted well, interviews can provide the researcher with in-depth information about what people think, feel and experience. This can provide rich data about the recalled experience of performance.</li> <li>- Provide a space for participants to discuss issues other than just those that they are asked about.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One-on-one interviews are relatively time- and resource-intensive, both to conduct and analyse.</li> <li>- Practical restrictions tend to limit interview data to small subset of participants, and it is difficult to build an overall picture of opinion using interviews.</li> </ul>
<b>Focus Groups</b>	A facilitated discussion with a group of participants. The focus group facilitator will typically prompt response with open questions, the aim being to document the commonalities and differences that emerge from the experience of the performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The group format enables a larger number of respondents to be involved than using one-to-one interviews.</li> <li>- Focus groups can help to give a sense of the range and diversity of participant experiences, and are therefore a way of articulating how different people might experience the same event in different ways.</li> <li>- Like interviews, successful focus groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Potential for certain individuals to lead, while others may feel less able to become swayed into following the dominant opinion.</li> <li>- The conversations can be more fluid and harder to 'direct' than in a one-to-one interview, thus requires skilled facilitation.</li> <li>- Focus group data can be complex and time-consuming to transcribe, code and analyse.</li> </ul>

<sup>7</sup> nef, p. 50.

		have a more 'natural flow' than questionnaires.	
<b>Questionnaire (online or printed)</b>	Questionnaires provide a means of collecting quantitative and/or qualitative data via a pre-determined set of questions – typically completed by respondents after an event. Questionnaire data can then be analysed using different techniques depending on the data collected.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can reach a potentially larger number of respondents.</li> <li>- Relatively quick for data collection and convenient for respondents.</li> <li>- With a large enough sample sizes observations can be made about the audience as a whole.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A danger of making assumptions (about what is important) and asking leading questions.</li> <li>- Impersonal</li> <li>- Can be difficult to contextualise questionnaire data.</li> </ul> <p>There can also be difficulties knowing how much time or thought a respondent has put in to each response.</p>

Table 1. Comparison of participant data collection methods.

As table 1 demonstrates, the selection of any one particular method over another has both advantages and disadvantages. An additional issue that impacts on all of these methods is the potential for these methods (particularly interviews or focus groups) to 'narrativise' or reframe the original live experience.<sup>8</sup> This is particularly an issue where a large amount of time has elapsed between the experience and the gathering of responses, which can change the meaning and memory of the experience, potentially exaggerating or omitting certain aspects.

In employing an experiential approach to understand the experiences of other individuals, Seamon describes the central importance of researcher and respondents as having a certain shared level of meanings and values. Only through a certain equivalence of meaning (and a level of written/ verbal competency on the part of the respondents) can the researcher undertake analysis of responses with a degree of confidence that their interpretation is faithful.<sup>9</sup> Shertock suggests that, in an ideal situation, respondents will have an almost 'spontaneous' interest in participating in the research, as

<sup>8</sup> Jaakko Stenros, Annika Waern and Markus Montola, 'Studying the Elusive Experience in Pervasive Games', *Simulation & Gaming*, 43 (2012), 339–55 (p. 347) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1046878111422532>>; nef, p. 38.

<sup>9</sup> David Seamon, 'A Way of Seeing People and Place: Phenomenology in Environment-Behavior Research', in *Theoretical perspectives in environment-behavior research*, ed. by S. Wapner and others (New York: Plenum, 2000), pp. 157–78 (pp. 166–167) <[http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-1-4615-4701-3\\_13](http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-1-4615-4701-3_13)> [accessed 14 November 2013].

a personal connection with the topic or issues tends to motivate respondents to provide the most thorough and accurate lived descriptions.<sup>10</sup> In performance research, this motivation is perhaps more assured by the fact that informants not only attended the event in the first instance but were sufficiently motivated to voluntarily share an account of their experience with the researcher.

An experiential framework advocates the type of in-depth engagement typically associated with interviews or discussion groups. Questionnaires rarely feature among the methods advocated in this type of qualitative research, principally because of the limitations in requiring subjects to respond within a rigid structure, which potentially limits the depth of information and inhibits the potential for emergent issues.<sup>11</sup> In this research, the desire to carry out face-to-face interviews with participants was weighed up against pragmatic concerns of time, resources, and access to a wide range of participants immediately after each performance event. This led to a research design that used questionnaires supported by a small number of face-to-face interviews (structured using the same questionnaire format). Although the depth of information provided by the questionnaire structure tends to be more limited, they have been selected for a very particular purpose - collecting information from a wider range of respondents that could not be reached by personal interview. Nevertheless, the choice of an online questionnaire (supported by a printed version in certain circumstances) raises a number of potential problematic issues in relation to the wider methodological choices and underpinning paradigms of the research that require acknowledgement:<sup>12</sup>

- difficulties in ensuring that all respondents will interpret questions and answers on the questionnaire in the same way and on the same 'level' and that the respondents will provide full and truthful responses
- a need to identify the context in which replies are being given
- a need for checks, balances, extensions, and modifications

Some of these concerns are alleviated to some extent by the particular nature of a study of participants (as opposed to a survey sampling the general public), where those questioned are all responding to a very particular event and context. The nature of collecting data in response to a

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<sup>10</sup> T. Shertock, 'Latin American Women's Experience of Feeling Able to Move toward and Accomplish a Meaningful and Challenging Goal', *Phenomenological inquiry in psychology*, 1998, 157–74 (p. 162).

<sup>11</sup> Peter Woods, 'Qualitative Research' (University of Plymouth, 2006)  
<<http://www.edu.plymouth.ac.uk/resined/qualitative%20methods%202/qualrshm.htm>> [accessed 8 November 2013].

<sup>12</sup> Woods.



specific bounded performance event also enables certain checks to be put in place to attempt to ensure an additional degree of credibility in the data collected:

- an introductory briefing given prior to each event was provided to participants, explaining that a qualitative study would be taking place, providing a brief description of the purposes of the study
- as part of this process, individual contact details were collected via an online or printed form (depending on the scenario)
- contact details were then used to circulate the questionnaire immediately after the performance

By following this procedure, it is possible to confirm (with reasonable confidence) that an individual respondent attended the event, and the length of time it took for an individual to respond. Despite these measures, there is still no guarantee that that individual question (or questions) could not be misinterpreted. A small number of respondents were interviewed (using the same structure of the questionnaire) as a follow-up process to better understand how respondents were interpreting the questions and to support the questionnaire responses with more detailed descriptions.

The structure of the questionnaires used was deliberately kept short and open in structure and free of jargon or complex theoretical terms. A series of structured closed questions (how did you hear about the performance?) was followed by the main part of the questionnaire; a series of open, unobtrusive and loosely structured questions that invited respondents to describe their personal account of the performance and elaborate on any additional issues. The design of the questionnaire was also carefully considered to address some of the problems associated with low response rates and the impersonal feel of online survey tools. This was also important in terms of the collaborative relationship with certain performance-makers, who were keen to see the look and feel of the survey material (including information sheet and online questionnaire) that tied into the graphic look and feel of the event. A custom interface (website) was designed and built to achieve this (Figure ). Both the questions and samples of the text and graphics were discussed with performance-makers prior to the launch of the questionnaire.



Figure 1. Custom interface designed and produced by RECITE for the first case study (chapter 6). Image: Author.

### Document analysis

Documentation plays an important and contested role in live performance. Chapter 2 concluded with a brief introduction to the critical issues surrounding the documentary methods and the between documentation and site-specific performance. The retrieval and analysis of performance documents and archive materials is primarily used to support other research methods (such as textual analysis or written accounts of first-hand experience), although the critical issues around the production and retrieval of performance documentation is a field of research in its own right.

Performance documents include:

- marketing materials and websites produced by performance-makers or institutions
- production photographs produced by performance-makers or institutions
- press reviews
- other archive material

Documents often represent one version of the event that has been created for a specific purpose, and therefore must not be taken as a factual form of reality<sup>13</sup>. However, they can be informative in supporting other methods (interviews and observations) and in building a broader picture of way a performance was marketed and documented.

<sup>13</sup> Flick.

**First-hand reflections**

The final method – which employs first-hand personal written reflections of the case-study performances - was employed to compliment the more traditional qualitative data collection techniques introduced so far.

In discussing his work on Graeme Miller's LINKED, Carl Lavery argues that the unique, almost 'collaborative' way in which individual participants are engaged by their participation in site-specific performances has important consequences for the way research into these practices is carried out and written up. While Lavery proposes a theoretical reading of LINKED that is instantly recognisable as part of an 'academic' discourse, he goes on to argue that detached and supposedly 'objective' voice used in academic writing is often inadequate to represent the affective and embodied nature of performance. Moreover, as each participant brings their own unique associations and personal history (as discussed in chapter 2) there simply can be no authoritative account of the way in which a site-specific work is experienced.<sup>14</sup> The highly subjective and first-person form of writing that Lavery proposes is therefore not an attempt to provide a definitive account, but a piece of documentation or 'practice in itself' that sits alongside the original performance and the multiplicity of other subjective readings - inviting others to compare and contrast their own experience.<sup>15</sup>

From the perspective of positivist research paradigms, the use of reflective writing as a research method (based on first-hand subjective accounts of an experience) could easily be rejected as open to misinterpretation, vague, lacking rigour, and lacking any form of internal or external validity. However, in the context of performance research, this form of engagement with a work is one way of developing "clarity and insight grounded in one's own experience of the world".<sup>16</sup> These sections of writing (expressed in each of the three case studies in the 'performance' section) permit the researchers personal voice into the research text - a voice that brings emotions, happenstance, and subjectivity. It is also intended as a method of engagement that helps to develop and inform the accounts of the performance-makers and other participants.

**Qualitative content analysis**

Social geographers Baxter and Eyles point to a tension that often exists in qualitative research between creative or imaginative forms of analysis and the standardised rigour demanded by methodological frameworks within the social sciences.<sup>17</sup> As an architectural researcher with a

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<sup>14</sup> Lavery, 'The Pepys of London E11: Graeme Miller and the Politics of Linked', pp. 156–157.

<sup>15</sup> Lavery, 'The Pepys of London E11: Graeme Miller and the Politics of Linked', p. 157.

<sup>16</sup> Seamon, p. 166.

<sup>17</sup> Baxter and Eyles, p. 505.

background of creative research and design practice, I believe that the analysis stage of the methodology should be addressed by an approach that is rigorous yet also creative, spatial, and visual. This primacy of the visual and the spatial has also been echoed in discussions with many of the site-specific performance practitioners and artists who have been involved in this research. The methodology developed for this research, therefore, directed me towards a method of analysis that could reflect the creativity, richness and depth of process of the practices investigated.

As described in chapter 5 and this appendix, qualitative data gathered has been gathered using a number of different methods. In both practitioner interviews and questionnaires, the focus has been on open-ended questions, while field notes and reflections contain divergent perspectives describing a wide range of issues and moments over the course of the three case studies. These multiple data sources suggested a qualitative content analysis approach accompanied by a visual or 'data display' strategy.<sup>18</sup> According to Miles and Huberman, the chances of drawing and verifying conclusions improved by the use of data displays, where the display permits comparison, themes, trends and links.<sup>19</sup>

A conventional content analysis approach starts with re-reading all transcripts and field notes several times, enabling the researcher to 'immerse' themselves in the data and obtain a sense of the whole. Field notes and interview summaries are printed or copied, with annotations, diagrams or commentary added alongside the text. The researcher then makes notes of any initial overall impressions, thoughts, and concepts. These annotations include explanatory comments and the tentative beginnings of pattern coding - identifying and linking emerging themes and constructs and highlighting words or phrases from transcripts that 'capture' key thoughts or discussions.<sup>20</sup> These themes may later be rejected or at least refined, as further analysis and data collection is undertaken. But they provide an account of the unfolding analysis and the internal dialogue that accompanied the process. As this process continues, labels for codes emerge that can be applied to a number of individual statements or across a number of texts. This is an inductive process, with codes first derived from the text and then linked or organised into categories. These categories are used to develop more meaningful clusters or themes.

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<sup>18</sup> Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis : An Expanded Sourcebook*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA. ; London: SAGE, 1994).

<sup>19</sup> Miles and Huberman, p. 92.

<sup>20</sup> Miles and Huberman; Philipp Mayring, 'Qualitative Content Analysis', in *A Companion to Qualitative Research*, ed. by Uwe Flick, Ernst von Kardoff, and Ines Steinke (London; Thousand Oaks, CA.; New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 2004), pp. 266–69.

The central tool proposed in Miles & Huberman's visual approach to qualitative analysis is the data display - a way of representing the codes or categories derived from qualitative content analysis in the form of maps, diagrams, matrices, or networks. The display works as way to organise large amounts of qualitative data into an accessible form in order to begin to refine codes and move towards tentative conclusions. The purpose of the data display is represent data in a way that is not possible through other forms of analysis:

- qualitative data is not stripped of its context
- mapped data is simultaneous, whereas text is sequential and dispersed (difficult to see the whole)
- displays can be added to when new data is collected

The map can also be used to display data collected through a number of different methods (interview, observations, questionnaire responses) on different layers, in a way that keeps these spatially separated (on an imaginary Z-axis – with layers that can be individually hidden) but also in a way that can also enable vertical connections to be made across these different data formats. As a visual tool, the data display enables the creative analyst to combine other forms of documents and other visual material on the same map (photographs, urban maps, chronologies, etc.).

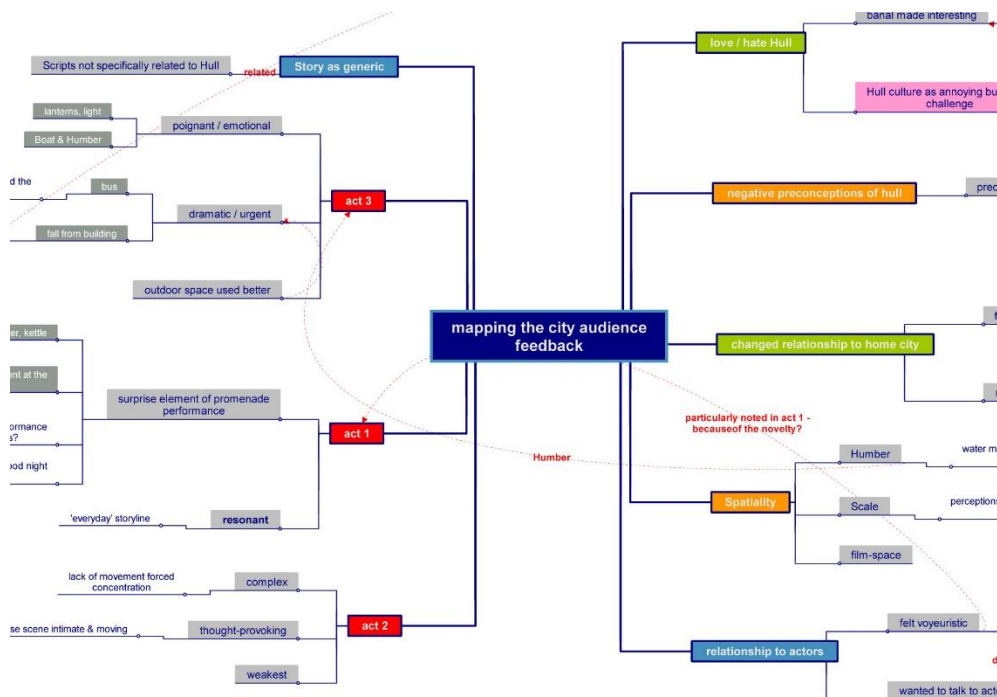


Figure 2. Extract from one of the visual maps used to organise codes and themes from the process of qualitative analysis. Image: Author.

With a case-based approach, the categories or themes identified by a content analysis and visual displays are presented within a discussion section at the end of each case study. In these discussion sections, any findings are related to any relevant literature, theoretical discourse, and research findings from other case studies. The discussions from each of the three case studies are then drawn together in a final discussion / conclusion chapter. As well as drawing out the key points from each case study into a main argument, this final chapter includes a summary of how the findings from the study contribute to knowledge in the field and sets out the implications (if any) for future practice, pedagogy, and research.







## **Appendix 3: Interview transcripts, questionnaires and notes**

### **Mapping the City, Hull Fruit Market (2011)**

- A) Interview with Helen Thackery, Events Manager at Hull City Council, April 2011
- B) Interview with Alan Lane, Artistic Director of Slung Low, April 2011
- C) Interview with Laura Clark, Producer of Slung Low, April 2011
- D) Mapping the City: Participant questionnaire, May 2011
- E) Mapping the City: Sample of field notes, April-May 2011

### **The Anfield Home Tour, Anfield Liverpool (2012)**

- F) Interview with Britt Jurgensen, Anfield Home Tour Director, February 2013
- G) Interview with Fred Brown, Anfield Home Tour Performer, February 2013
- H) Interview with Jeanne van Heeswijk, Creator of Homebaked / Anfield Home Tour, May 2013

### **The Port of Sheffield, Lower Don Valley Sheffield (2012)**

- I) Collaborative reflection and analysis session with Deborah Egan, initiator of the Port of Sheffield, 2013
- J) Interview with Simon Ogden, City Development Manager at Sheffield City Council, 2013
- K) The Port of Sheffield audio-walk: Participant questionnaire, September 2012
- L) The Port of Sheffield audio-walk: Sample of field notes
- M) The Port of Sheffield audio-walk: Funding details, April 2012



## Helen Thackery, Hull City Council Events Manager

*8<sup>th</sup> April 2011 - Hull City Council Offices*

*Adam Park: I must admit I've never been to Hull before today and I've lived in Sheffield for 8 years, which is not very far away but I was quite surprised at the number of different types of spaces, and the way the fruitmarket felt very much like a 'film set'.*

Helen Thackery: But literally of the back of Slung Low there is also the degree level art students who have chosen to do 3 performances down there, 2 of which are for people to take their final exam, and they are all people who are studying in Hull but they didn't even know that this space existed, especially Castle Street being that road that goes across the middle – people have to have a reason to go across there. So that's good in itself, its giving people a different view. And I always think as well you never know who's going to be the next person to come in and invest in the city, we're all struggling the same as every city is for money at the moment and I think the more people you can get through – the clipper round the world yacht race – the guys berth in there and spent a huge amount of time – and these are a lot of people who are very rich – and the property sales went up 30% over the clipper weekend, with people coming and saying 'I love this place' – you never know where your next opportunity coming from really.

*AP: The first thing I wanted to ask was how you would describe Hull to someone's who hasn't been here – and I know you've already covered it in terms of the appeal of the city but I wondered if there was anything else to add.*

HT: I think, certainly for people like Slung Low who come in and yourself whose never seen the city before – just entering the city and being part of it even for a few hours is real myth-buster. Hull has suffered from an awful lot of bad press, but I actually think in itself it's a really pleasant place to be, and what does happen is in terms of our arts is a lot of people travel from what you perceive as the more affluent East Riding in Hull to get their arts experiences, because East Riding as whole, although it's a very big area, it concentrates on other things whereas Hull, probably bit to do with Hull Truck theatre and so on, has taken the chance to do that risk and we know from the figures that we've got from things like Freedom Festival etc that the amount of people coming in is a huge percentage and when you ask why they say things like 'Hull will take the chance' 'Hull dares to be different'. And think sometimes over the years its gone against Hull but certainly in the Arts context its really going for us.

We have got a number of what I suppose you would call café-bars that are struggling but they're really starting to make their way through, and actually I think that the people who are coming to watch the production will find a different city centre to the one that they imagined happens after 5 O Clock when everybody leaves the buildings. So it gives us a chance to showcase how different the city is. And with them using the fruitmarket area, 2 years ago now we did a thing called Caribosse in there which was basically fire installations and everybody came back from the marina, and said 'crikey we forgot the marina was that nice'. And its not always about big flashy brand new flats its actually got its own character

*AP: Did Hull go looking for this project (with Slung Low)?*

HT: Yes. Every few years we commission an amount of work for different things. What we're conscious of in the city is the area that's used for the project is going to be part of a multi-million pound redevelopment, and once Yorkshire Forward started to go down it was basically withdrawn from that and it just seems such a shame. Im a little bit of a traditionalist I can see that area being so many things other than another set of block of flats, another marina development, and so what they did was they went out and tried to bring in something that would carry on from Freedom and Cariboss and everything and make people use that area for what it really is which is actually a different and diverse zone.

*AP: Broadly speaking, what are the Council's main aims in promoting this outdoor performances – is it purely economic?*

HT: Its more about our cultural offer. To be honest we could go down the route of a lot of these type of things in terms of charging etc but as a city what we try and do is to give a really diverse a generally free cultural offer to people the Arts Council have just recognised us in terms of giving us quite a huge amount this year, because what they've felt was that we weren't exclusive to certain groups - it's a case of here's your performance and everybody can be part of it, and I'll be honest with you in the economic climate the city has embraced the idea that you might not have some of the money and the goods that you need at home but actually there is this free entertainment that gets people out. There's certain health benefits as well of getting people walking around, taking part, being out in the sun. There's all the public order things when we've got stuff like this going on we know that crime rates drop dramatically, so we're actually saving on other things as well. And people say 'surely if you've got loads of people outside that puts the pressure on the police but what the police are telling us is actually when you've got organised events on crime rates drop and they're actually able to get on with other things instead of dealing with petty vandalism. Because people are expecting these areas to be used all the time.

*AP: Can you describe your role in helping them (Slung Low) to find sites and planning*

HT: I'm the events Officer for the council, and what we have as part of the events team is something called the Event Safety Advisory Group (ESAG), so its things like police, fire, ambulance, highways, H+S, and the legal side etc. What we do in this city is if a project comes in – rather than someone having to sit with the telephone directory and think 'I need to inform the police, fire brigade etc etc', they come into this group and say 'this is where we are this is what we're trying to do'. And what happens is everyone in the city has some knowledge of exactly what's going on. So with Slung Low the fact that they wanted to throw a body off a building as part of their presentation, you can imagine the 999 calls, whereas now we know if that 999 call comes in that person would be reassured that we know what's going to happen. The other side of that is that Slung Low wanted to have a diverse range of buildings and areas where they wanted to do stuff so its been about helping them gain those permissions. The other side of things is that we run a multitude of events per year and what would've been really silly to do is have Slung Low on the same night as the opening of Hull Truck or whatever, so its about balancing up so we can try and space our provision right throughout the year. And from an economic point of view a lot of the areas that we are looking at Slung Low using are areas that we feel at the moment due to shops closing etc aren't being used as much as they should be, so its about ensuring that the whole of the city centre gets a piece of this project.

*AP: And how do you manage issues such as safety and security on the night?*

HT: The big issue for this project especially is getting over people's perceptions of a large group of people wandering around. Its silly – if 20 friends decided to go for a night out and decided to wander from pub to pub we don't look at it, but when you suddenly announce to the blue light services that we're going to get 20 people together and they're going to cross roads and things – all of a sudden its 'who's going to steward them, who's going to do this and that'. So some of it is breaking down the barriers and saying right; these are actually adults, they do cross roads normally, they're part of an organised group. And even the earphones thing - whether people can hear or not – the issue is whether people can still cross roads. So some of it is going back to people (ESAG) and saying 'think what you've actually said to me' – these people may have got a bus, train, helicopter or whatever to the venue. The other thing is that once you call it an 'event' there are certain parameters that come in – so people start asking for public liability insurance, H+S etc. so from our side a lot of that has been smoothing that way along. Because what Slung Low are doing is using provision – so its a pub, or it's the pier or whatever, so it's about saying to people – it is an event in name but actually its about using infrastructure for what it's actually meant to be used for.

*AP: So they haven't necessarily had to get specific events licences in that respect?*

HT: We have a public entertainment license - about seven years ago we licenced the whole of the city centre. So some of it has been a negotiation – going back to licensing and ensuring that they don't have to jump through hoops to get the licenses, almost smoothing the way.

*AP: You mentioned Caribosse and Freedom, what other sorts of outdoor events that have had a good response?*

HT: We do a number of events in the city centre but we've recently had the Clipper round the world yacht race start and finish with over 100,000 people, we run the annual fair which is quite an odd one because we are the only truly city centre fair in the country, and still one of the biggest fun fairs in Europe... that attracts just about 1 million visitors in a 8-day period. The tour of Britain we brought into the city centre, we looking at doing Skyride right through the city centre, we do all of our jazz concerts, maritime events, and even fireworks nights go off from the city centre where traditionally a lot of cities take everything out to the parks. Our parks are highly successful and do run a lot of events but... not coming from Hull there's an east and a west of Hull and it's quite funny because sometimes the two don't meet even to the point that we're the only city with two rugby teams – one in the east and one in the west – both in the Superleague and what we find is the city centre is one place where everybody comes to mix. And that works well for us because it means that, with Freedom for instance, the economic benefit to the businesses was something approaching £8-9million for a 2 day event. Now where in a lot of other city centres there is a huge drop in occupation of shops we've dropped but not so much because by putting on events every 2-3 months. If I tell you that during Freedom, in Princess Quay the turnover of a lot of the bigger shops went up £7000 a day, and a lot of our pubs say that the events keep them in business because they know if they've had a slack week they'll have a good weekend. We work with a lot of the café-bars to do a thing called 'half past the weekend' which is basically getting people out on a Wednesday night. It seems a really simple thing if you're in London and Leeds whereas in Hull it's still a growing thing. Coming from London myself it's equally driven me mad but I'm also seeing it as a challenge – saying to people 'it's only Wednesday but you're allowed to go out'. But people get in a routine of doing things, and we have a lot of workers in the city are at firms that do dual shifts (day times and evenings) so there are families that are split by shift systems as well, so a lot of it is trying to work around that. And this is why things like Slung Low work well because it's over a week – there's 5 opportunities to go to it. You have to pre-book but if you're going to the cinema etc you also have to pre-book and it's quite a lot of money that you laying out whereas here it's so much more accessible than your standard theatres.

*AP: I would like to ask about this accessibility, it is £10-12 so how wide do you see participation in theatre events in Hull? They're not like the big free festivals where everybody comes in are they?*

HT: Our theatre prices like everybody's have gone up to around £25-30. That's less accessible because for families and children, whereas this is real middle-of-the-road- you're talking about two people going for the average price of less than a meal on a night out, whereas unfortunately theatres – for this year's panto we priced it up for a family of two children and two adults at £112 and in this current time that's not working.

*AP: And being from Sheffield for me it's interesting that you are talking about the North, or outside London being different culturally – the idea of taking a bit of a chance because people from Hull or Sheffield might not be used to these types of events.*

HT: Sometimes there's almost too many opportunities and people think well they're always going to be there and don't bother. A classic example for us to tell you about would be last year's Freedom Festival we had a group of street artists from France who do a ballet performance suspended from a crane. They said In other cities across the world we generally draw a crowd of around 500 people – it's all very controllable. I had no reason to disbelieve them but in Hull they drew 22,000 people and Queen Victoria Square was bursting at the seams. And the guy came up to us afterwards and he was just so animated saying 'we never ever perform to a

crowd like this'. But he's used to going to London, Edinburgh, Lyon, Reims. And he said – people there just think 'oh there's another street performance on' but you guys embraced it. And he said every time we looked down from the crane everybody had their eyes on it. And I think because we do pick and choose – because to a certain extent we can only afford a certain amount, that people whenever there is an opportunity really really embrace it. 17:40 We went to Hogmany two years ago and Cariboss was on. Down the Royal Mile about 6000 people passed it during the 3 days, in Hull we had 5000 the first night, 12000 the second and 22000 the third night – and that was word of mouth. This may seem an odd way to do it but we knew what we could do if we chose to only advertise it by word of mouth, so the first night was a preview for invited guests. But the good thing was that we purposely put it in an area where there was a great big throughflow of people – we're talking 4 or 5 days before 'why are you putting those structures up there?', 'what are they doing?' – and when we started interviewing people they said 'oh my friend told me I had to come' 'they rang me last night having seen this fantastic thing'. And one of the annoying things for us sometimes is we put up 10000 posters or put it the Hull Daily Mail and people say 'we don't see it', and yet we can tell 100 people and everybody's heard it!

*AP: It depends on the pull as well I guess, and whether it is 'unusual'. HT: Absolutely.*

*AP: One of the aspects of my research is documentation and 'what's left' after a live event like this one, so wanted to ask what the City Council Even team's perspective was on making records or documents of events.*

HT: Where we can – so for the bigger events like Freedom, Clipper – we will actually do monitoring and evaluation, and we might take a sample size of 500-600. Where it's a smaller event we tend to put people out there who will speak to people on the night. Consultation and evaluation has become quite expensive now for thorough stuff, but what also utilise is we have a 'People's Panel' across the city as well which is very proactive and we get feedback via them as well. Also a lot of people in this city love writing into the local paper so we monitor and lot of stuff in there and pick quite a lot of stuff up. And certainly we look north as such in the local radio stations etc- we get quite a lot of feedback through there. So we tend to pick our evaluation up in a lot of different ways. Unfortunately good news never travels as fast as someone who's got a problem, but we have got quite a hardcore of followers on Facebook as well that give us quite a lot of input and Twitter etc. We're certainly using the social networking side an awful lot more, because we find if you stand in front of somebody with a paper questionnaire they're like 'aw what do you want' (feigns annoyance) whereas its quite easy to go back – bang - 20 words on Facebook, and actually it seems more truthful in a way – its just their honest feedback at that time.

*AP: Its interesting – these are also tools I am thinking of using to collect information from people who have attended but going more in depth in terms of their memories, experiences and how it might change the way they think about the city.*

HT: One of the things that happened in the last few months is that – as I said to you earlier about there being an East and a west and the two teams never meet – one of the things we've just launched is the Hull 2013, which is basically a joint bid between both rugby clubs to host some of the games of the Rugby League world cup. Now five years ago people would've said 'if it's not at Craven Park /KC Stadium then I'm not going', whereas actually more and more people are saying is 'if its rugby league I'll go'. Now without any doubt there is a love in the city of rugby league – more so than football, and what's been nice is that as people have come together for other events and things have gone really well is they're wanting more, they're wanting bigger events, they're wanting things that sit larger on the world stage. They're not just wanting an event just because it's in Hull and they almost deserve it. They're saying actually Hull's a great place to be, let's bring things in. A certainly for the Rugby World Cup – we launched it on our Facebook site and literally within 36 hours we had 2000 followers. That shows you the depth of what we're trying to do.

*AP: You say its divided down rugby league lines. Is there a broader social divide between East and West as well?*

HT: Yes. You tend to find that people who are born in the west never move from the west and vice versa. It's funny because even when you see people getting married now, when they've come from opposite sides there's really quite a tussle over which side people go. *AP: Where does that come from?* Traditionally, if you lived in the east you were a docker, and you lived in the west you were a fisherman. And some would say that dockers were held in a higher regard in terms of social status to a certain extent, others would argue if you were a fisherman (the same was true). Its been steeped in that history really. What's been quite funny is that if you look at the city you have the city centre and what you might call the old-style tenement streets and as you go out it gets bigger – and both sides have equally built their.. one side its Kirk Ella, West Ella, Swanland and the other side you've got Bilton Hetons. So it's quite funny, but what you find is if people have gone up in monetary value or status they just move out that way, they don't ever cross! (laughs).

*AP: Because Sheffield is very different – with the geographical split between wealth and non-wealth*

*AP: To round off, I wanted to know whether you were excited about seeing the final production of MTC?*

I am. Like I say I'm a southerner who's come north, and I did struggle when I first came here to find what I felt was a cultural experience and Slung Low is probably the first time... Cariboss and that have been great but I think this is the first time we've really branched into slightly alternative street theatre, and I think there's a lot more to come as well. And that's what excites me for the planning for this year's freedom festival where we're trying to extent some of that (street theatre) into Freedom as well. Because it is very different. *AP: It's far more than just a street spectacle.* HT: Yes. It makes a big big difference, because this city's primarily been built on sport, and there have been the doubters over the years. If I tell you that the first year we did Freedom a lot of people wrote to the paper and said 'I'm a council tax payer what the bloody hell do I want to an arts festival for', to the point at the moment we're about 4 weeks away from a local election, basically we are Lib Dem at the moment and Labour have threatened that if they come in they are going to axe Freedom. And people are saying 'you dare- it's our money, it's our right to spend our money as we want to – don't you dare axe Freedom'. And so in three years.. I heard a funny thing one day when I was stood in the queue at the bank and there was two young people in front of me - I don't know how to describe them without it sounding derogatory – but you know, caps backwards, language not very good and everything else. And they were talking about the local club which is the Welly – if you're a teenager in Hull you have to have been to the Welly at some point - and they are going on; 'are you going to the Welly?' 'the Welly's not cool – Freedom's cool its worth waiting a year for'. And that's a 15-16 year old kid whose life is going out every Friday night –saying 'I'm not going there any more – I want to go somewhere that's cool'. And we have groups of young people in Hull – we call them 'Moshers' goth-type kids, who when we went into Queens Gardens a few years ago they were saying (about Freedom) 'You're chucking us out of our space', then two hours later when they came back ; 'well we didn't realise you were doing *this*'. And this is where the police say that they love it, because there is such a social mix of people. And you hear people going around the city – (offering) a little bit like bribes – 'well I'll go to the museums quarter if you come over to Caribosse'. But then at the end of the night as its finishing the whole family unit's back together and quite often we're getting 3 or 4 generations of people stood watching the same thing. So that's been good, but to hear the conservations change as well – rugby and football are very much around ... quite often calling the ref or whatever else - just standing there and saying 'isn't this beautiful' it's just nice to hear.





## **Alan Lane, Slung Low Creative Director**

*8<sup>th</sup> April 2011 - Hull City Council Offices, the Fruit Market, Hull*

*Adam Park: The first question is going to be a general one about Hull; what were your first impressions of the city? Had you been here before?*

Alan Lane: No I hadn't been here before, and I didn't want to do the show here, I was going to say it's a matter of public record but its probably quite important that its not. We had this model of presenting something for a different city, a city that wasn't Hull, and as often as is the case it was where the money came from and where the opportunities came from, so I agreed to do Hull without ever having visited here (*Ok*) and I came and the show is the journey from the train station to the sea in Hull, and that was my journey too – it gets increasingly more and more interesting the further you get away from the train station. And Hull is much nicer than I thought it was going to be – I now like it. But its really dead in the night – strikingly very very dead. But its nice.

*AP: So the idea came before the city?*

AL: The model of presenting the work, so something that would be epic. So if you like, all of our pieces can be stacked up as a conversation with something, possibly a conversation with how far can you push theatre. So we'd done one that was out and about in the city and that reacted to city landscape or cityscapes I suppose in Liverpool but that was made as 7 shows but they all ran concurrently so an audience of 300 would be divided up in to 7 groups. So as a production it was quite an undertaking but as an experience for the audience as a series of stories they were all quite light – it felt a bit 'tapas-y'. So one a night, they lasted 55 minutes, you could come back. And one of the things about cities and this sonic walkabout tour that we do is that for me the phrasing it was that it was romantic and epic and grand and magical / magic-real. And all those things we achieved in Liverpool but I felt the form of these 7 things meant that what we were doing was creating an event that was fun but which story you saw was sort of irrelevant. So the challenge was to try and make something that could be so transformative and encompassing you could spend 4 hours in a fiction – be fed, be moved, get on transport, all sorts of things and at the end feel that the world cant possibly be the same because you have had this experience. And that's epic and that was the model. And they said you have to do that in Hull.

*AP: Who was 'they'?*

AL: I Move, who were the people who gave the money, from the Cultural Olympiad. Well they didn't say you *have* to do it in Hull but they said there is an opportunity in Hull and would you like to do it there. [3.00] And my concern,( just knowing without coming here and knowing what I knew about Hull) was could Hull *hold* and epic story, because I think Sheffield, for example, is in many ways very vainglorious; big hills, big nightlines (horizon lines), big areas of decay, big areas of renovation – they don't fix that huge steelworks but they put a great big gleaming.. I mean it is a wonderfully vainglorious city and you could do a big vainglorious.. and actually Hull did turn out to be in many ways tragic and beautiful, and I think stories are tragic and beautiful.

*AP: And it is sort-of grand in its own way as well. And despairing when you get to the sea – when you get to the sea in Liverpool you feel free, when you get to the sea in Hull you feel sad. [4.00]*

*AP: The title of the show mapping the city – mapping is a concept that originates form geography, architecture, urbanism – what does it mean to you? What's your 'mapping'?*

AL: When I used to drink I could drunk find myself back to anywhere that I had been that sober (I ) never could. And that's because I was following a series of instincts and urges and emotions -and we map environments. I go back to Crookes in Sheffield and I'm 20 again and the place has changed and I was back there a few months ago and it has changed but I'm reminded of certain smells and just really the sense of something and that we

map our environments like that. I spoke recently about Swiss Cottage tube station to me could be the place where I fell in love so for me is the most amazing cathedral of love and just to you its just a shitty tube station. And that that's mapping. Its about time actually - there's this thing Derren Brown (maybe it wasn't his but I heard it from him) which is you fall. We put a watch on you, the numbers move so fast (moving moving moving)- and you go oh right now it is moving so fast I can no longer see the numbers. If we take you to the top of the town and throw you off – on the way down, if you look at that watch you would be able to see the numbers. You slow down time – its magic – time travel. And therefore the same is true of distance so if Im really engaged in something; listening to a great piece of music, if im thinking about something really sad or really happy, I can walk many miles and not feel them. But I could also walk from here (Council office) to the warehouse and feel every single second. So just as time changes according to our mental state so does distance and environment. I love Liverpool actually – Liverpool has been really good to me as a city – as a result I tend to I always think its shining – I always think its sunny in Liverpool . Id imagine if you measured the amount of sunshine Liverpool and Leeds got it would probably be pretty much the same. *AP: Maybe even less actually* (AL laughs). AL: And so that's what I mean by mapping. So that's what the stories do – they map the characters, emotions and also yourself. If you live in Hull and you walk past the BBC building in 2 months time and you've seen the show – I don't think youre going to be able to walk past that BBC building without remembering the moment when you saw a woman take a swan dive off the top and stop hovering in the air. [7.00]

*AP: In terms of the company – why is it important for you to take theatre outdoors? (What is it that drives you into the rain, discomfort and lack of mugs!?)*

AL: I think the answer is probably two or three-fold, one of which is purely artistic, so I'll give that as the first one because that's more interesting. The sheer breadth of image that we can have. In the show that was the precursor to this in Liverpool I had at one point a tracking shot that lasted maybe 80 metres. A football pitch is 80m – its extraordinary. The finale of this (Mapping the City) is when burning lanterns appear and we think were being watched by hundreds of people – its just extraordinary – outside of properly funded film you just can't paint those sorts of pictures. So that's what it frees up – so its this purely artistic thing. I also think that... an underground multi-storey car park [used for 'They Only Come out at Night'] looks just like an underground multi-storey car park does in fiction, in films, in photographs – it just does. So if Im doing a show about an underground multi-storey car park I could build one but if someone's already done it for me I may as well just get on with it and the good news about that one is it looks like it, smells like it, touches like it and everything. But the same is true for a railway station, if you want to throw someone off the top of a building the first thing you need to do is have is the top of a building. And so for me the real world is the best replica of the real world I know of, so I will *drag* it into my fiction. It the 'magic-real' - the real already exists, Ive got to concentrate on the magic part of it. The slightly more mundane aspect of it is that they won't give me the biggest stages in the country - Im 32 from Leeds, and also I want people to see the stories and want people to be moved by the stories who come from all walks of life and think there's still a degree to which its difficult to get certain walks of life in a theatre building – there's no such problem getting them in a multi-storey car park. So I think there's a combination of the artistic and also the politics of the theatre.

*AP: One of the people I have spoke to was a Q&A with David Hare when he came to Sheffield last month, and he said that we would like to keep on taking theatre outside (like he did when he was a student) because of his political convictions, but he couldn't deal with the loss of aesthetic control.*

AL: I worry about the loss of my aesthetic control too (*sarcasm*). That's about framing, and also how early on... Ive no idea about Mr Hare and he will do what he will, and does it very well... but if you have a railway station and you want to do play about a ferry then you've picked the wrong place.

*AP: Do you embrace this 'happenstance' – things that aren't in the frame come into the frame?*

AL: We build it into the fiction as well, the audience always have a bit of role in our plays, so in the army ones [Beyond the frontline] we used the fact that.. in the bit in front of the Lowry... we created a fiction that allowed for the fact that people would be walking past – not part of the show looking at these people with headphones and thinking ‘what you fucking idiots’ (accent) and they played out their own roles – so we said oh people will do this but its because of... And also we once had a chorus of young youth theatre people who were playing a group of hoodies for us and they were arrested by the police because they were out on the streets and the police thought they were real hoodies and the audience were there while they were getting arrested and I got congratulated that night in the bar by one of the people who programmed the show for my use of authentic uniforms. So I think there is enough flab in the show for that to happen when there isn’t we make sure its behind closed doors so it doesn’t get interrupted.

*AP: You talk about your use of headphones – it seems to be quite a big thing and part of your aesthetic - its on your flyers. Obviously it overcomes one big issue which is sound levels, but are you interested in exploring other forms of mobile technology?*

AL: The form of broadcast into the ears has been an ongoing development for us we’ve tried literally every form of doing it, and in terms of mobile technology but as in mobile –we get through so many car batteries you have no idea. *AP: Im thinking about in terms of audience engagement* . AL: There's two forms of shows that we make one of which is these big epic ones and then things like ‘Knowledge Emporium’ and our other smaller shows that engage directly with an audience. Yes there is a degree but not in these big models of epic, I think its in our other work we do.

*AP: So to pick up on something we touched upon earlier – the wider participation of people who wouldn’t normally go into a theatre – do think that could be pushed further? You still have to go and buy a ticket from Hull Truck which costs £10.*

AL: Yeah. But I think we have different types of audience so yes that’s no definitely true and there's a degree to which that’s the nature of where we get our money from those are the.... But for example in Salford there were people who came just to partake in the installation which was having 150 soldiers with guns and massive explosions and army trucks and they would come and they would engage with us. And that engagement would be both fictional as in they would come and play the game and talk to the soldiers and produce these identity cards for them – adults I mean – but they would also come and talk to me and say ‘what are you doing’ so, they wouldn’t come we offered them tickets. There were lots of different people but there was one family in particular who kept coming back and they didn’t want to see the show they must have heard that show three or four times from me and so that’s interesting in terms of documentation. In London in the Almeida is a very posh theatre and we were brought in as a bit of rough - I have no problem with that at all – but the area that we were touring around would go through a very affluent area and then a very very not-affluent area and there was this moment when we made a solar system out of lamps and a basketball court that the audience looked at and they listened to their headphones and every night lots and lots of people would come out onto their doorstep and watch the audience watch this solar system and we dropped a note round to the houses telling them the FM frequency the could listen to the show – and none of them did – they weren’t interested. They were interested in this, and they liked it and they were more than happy. Very rarely did we get any aggression. We turn up with our caravan, our dog, and our wood-burner and people tend to talk to us. *AP: It seems almost putting your audience in a performative-type role.* AL: *Absolutely.* They are performing and the same questions are always asked by our funders who then insist we charge tickets and have a box office but how is this accessible? Before we charge £15 for it - how is this accessible? And you go ‘it will happen in Hull all sorts of things its not ‘flash-mob-y’ but it has the same sentiment as a flash-mob, which is; on the way home in 3 weeks time someone going home will see a tricycle going down the street with two people sat on the back drinking whiskey being followed by probably me in a set of headphones and it be a little thing that will light up his day in some way. We did a show called ‘Time at Moghul Gardens’ it was in a park and it lasted 8 hours, on

the one hand it can genuinely be described as an experimental experiential durational piece of fractured narrative combining sort-of very abstract high-end dance with very pretentious photographic exhibitions and storytelling. On the other hand it was two blokes in suits and a bird in a white dress dancing round on a sign telling people what they were doing and telling stories and because we didn't use any of those words (fractured narrative etc), it just happened in a park and it was free it was *huge* - thousands of people stayed – some for 5 minutes some for 8 hours and it was a difficult hard show the story was back and forth and it was about children dying and it was a family environment and it was not in any way 'ITV 3pm on a Saturday'. But because it wasn't called 'difficult' people read it fine. I was reminded by something I heard a couple of days ago by Bertold Brecht – something about people watching football (Im not a big Brecht fan) how a person can intuitively understand excellence in football; why something doesn't work, structure, formation, cheating, a sense of fairness and something done well, all these things – can't play football but he can read it and I think something happened in the arts where that argument has shifted slightly 'we don't like opera' – well all that flash-mob stuff that fucking mobile phone company tell us we *do* like opera - we like it fine. We don't like thinking that we are wankers- that's different. And I think that we do high-end arts fine. I was in Germany last week for a conference and saw a piece of 'Yelanie' which is the most abstract difficult writing Ive ever seen in my life but it was about a story that happened in the city 18 months ago in Koln and it was packed in a way that no theatre piece would ever be here. On the one hand it was the highest of high arts on the other hand it was a story about the city and it was a piece of community theatre - it was both those things at once. And I think we divide them up a little bit. Partly being outside, partly the 'city' part of mapping the city is an attempt at.... notwithstanding I hear the 'yes but its £10 and you still have to go to Hull Truck'. And I don't really know what to do about that in a formal, official way- I know that there are plenty of people who see our shows and often end up with headphones who don't necessarily go through that process – but that's because were operating in a city, in a real landscape, but we're also operating in a formal model which is who pays and who funds it.

*AP: How are you approaching the documentation of this show?*

AL: We have invested more money than we would normally in a photographer to document extensively because this is a really big deal for us and it won't be seen by many people and we're not sure if it has the capabilities to tour. So we'll do that more heavily than we would normally and we're going to make this book which is a combination of text and photographs and that will be quite simple.

*AP: And finally are you nervous about who it's going to be received by Hull?*

AL: No not yet, I will be when it starts to form I think. Not really by Hull I don't contrive to... we've worked in almost every city in this country and people are different in the way that.. but they're still human. I don't think there's people that are all of a sudden going to love experimental theatre or hate it any more or less than Liverpool, so no I don't think so. Im worried about doing the shows justice – because I think if I can do the plays justice then the people are going to enjoy it.

*AP: You had the script (with the three stages) before you came here?*

AL: No we brought the writers here and they spent a lot of time on site and then they went away and wrote and came back and we looked at the text in relation to the space and did it again. So the idea or model existed – a show existed called 'mapping the city' and they said 'well what happens in that show' and we said 'we don't know yet – give us the money and we'll find out, we'll do it in Sheffield' and they said 'do it in Hull' so we said give us the money and we'll go to Hull. In very simple terms. And then we wrote the play – completely specific not just for Hull or the idea of Hull but literally for these streets. *AP: And when you say they came here and that generated the script – were they talking to people or just musing in the harbour?* AL: We came here and walked a lot and there were some things I wanted to do and wanted to provoke them into doing in terms of large pictures. I wanted to make sure it didn't become pastoral or it didn't become domestic that it remained epic and magic-real. So we spent a long time wandering around reading the walls; 'look - this person

lived here' and that sort of thing. None of that made it directly into the show but it (indirectly) did when you see it – 'that's why we're doing a show about boats' or 'that's why we're doing a show about buses'.

**Documentation methods** (notes of a further conversation following the recorded interview)

*Slung Low used to document in the form of 'cut-down' promo videos – but these proved to be incredibly time-consuming and only had a use for marketing – to persuade people to fund the next piece of work. If documentation is disconnected from the performance it becomes something else – a marketing tool.*

*'True' documentation should exist within the reality of the performance. For example, in 'They only come out at night' the script was written as a 'diagetic' graphic novel which was used to directly create the performance. This graphic novel was then referred to during the performance (as a prop) and also available as a document or 'artefact' that the audience could purchase. Artefacts were also used for the performance 'Helium', where a copy of the play prose (addressed to the recipient) was attached as a pamphlet to a helium balloon (a recurring motif in the play?). Instructions were included on the pamphlet to pass it on to someone who hadn't seen the play.*

*Relatively few people will see the play in Hull (25/30 people per show, running for 5 nights), so the company are documenting using a book (and ebook with hyperlinks and sound?), as well as commissioning a photographer to spend time capturing the process and live shows (photography is common but will be used to an even greater extent in Hull).*



## **Laura Clark, Slung Low Producer**

*8<sup>th</sup> April 2011 - Hull City Council Offices, the Fruit Market, Hull*

*Adam Park: What were your impressions of Hull? Had you been before?*

Laura Clark: I hadn't before the project- I'd never been to Hull before and I've probably been here at least a dozen times now for various meetings and things and we're into our first week of actually being here but its probably more than a dozen times. When I first got here, before I saw the water and the sea and everything I thought 'oh its kind of like a normal city centre, maybe a smaller kind-of city'. I thought there was some beautiful buildings though, but when we started to explore further down towards the sea and round the fruitmarket you stumble across lots of little alleyways and things that take you out to places and then lovely little buildings that look like they're hundreds of years old. I mean, its quite a unique city to be on the edge like that- on the water. Its not somewhere that you actually... you know like Manchester you pass through to go North or whatever – Hull you actually have to be coming to Hull to go to Hull.. *AP: Yeah I'd never been here* LC: It's a city on the edge isn't it.

*AP: And Alan told me a bit but I wanted to get your perspective on how you first came to work here-*

LC: Oh why the company came to work in Hull - not why I came to work at the company – that's a really long story! So we'd been commissioned by IMove which is one of the cultural Olympiad organisations- they've got them in each region and they've been set up, they're linked in with Arts Council and Legacy Trust so the way they're working in Yorkshire is they're doing a curated programme so we put forward an idea that we wanted to do this idea of 'mapping the city' at that point it wasn't written it was more the model that we wanted to work from and the model working in the city is something we've been developing over a number of years and this is something that we wanted to do. At the time we didn't have a specific location in mind, but because we're part of curated programme obviously they've got things happening in all different cities and areas across the region. So they said to us would we look at Hull as an option, which we did do, and we came to Hull and thought 'yeah this would work here' spent a few days researching , then got writers to come over see what kind of ideas it sparked within them as well, and so it wasn't our decision to come to Hull but it was one that we mutually agreed we could do this project here. Does that answer your question? *AP: Yes, definitely*

*AP: You said it could be any city?* LC: The model could be any city - this is for Hull. *AP: But are there certain cities that you would like to work in – is it something about being in the North, a certain size or something? (sorry its not a very clearly worded question).* LC: No its interesting because what you're asking is what is the ideal city for us or something like that. *AP: Yes. We would never rule anywhere out -its actually one of the most interesting things – going to a city and making the idea work there. A lot of people get - especially when it comes to the practical side of things – and the licensing what route we're going to go and who you're going to take and people get really het up about that but a lot of that until we get here, until the scripts are written, its really difficult for us to say 'well this would be our ideal' because we work with the city, and I think some people find it quite difficult to grasp that concept but actually we work with what's there and what we've got and that's interesting part of it and that's the magic of it as well.*

*AP: Leading on from that – when you get to a place how would you go about finding the right sites – the site where you can operate?*

LC: There's a lot of practical considerations – so actually if you think about it you have a script, and the writer may come on their visits, and they have a notion in their mind, you know when you have a memory of something 'oh that train station's next to that fountain which is next to that...'. But practically for the audience we have to work out with the script how we can get from A-B, so when we're here we pace it out, we time it, we see what's going to happen and then we respond to what's around about. So if we get to a certain point in

the script and we think we need a 2<sup>nd</sup> hand shop, an empty shop or something we tweak it so that the script works and then also if we start one route – in Liverpool we had seven shows going out at once – so we had to make sure those routes don't clash. So its literally being on the streets and the pavement and walkabout and see what works. And not everybody wants to work with you – so you find the perfect building, perfect location and the person might say no we don't want you to come here and do that. *AP: How easy is it to persuade people to open up and let you organise such an epic outdoor theatre event?* The council have been really really positive and really supportive, Visit Hull and E-Chaucer have been very positive and supportive as well, the company that we've got the warehouse from – sometimes people are really enthusiastic about wanting to help, wanting to be involved – Oxfam have donated books to us – and then it can be quite tricky when commercial or private businesses which are quite wary about what we're doing – and when we actually want access into a building to put performers in there so people are passing and seeing stuff - people get a bit nervous because they're uncertain or unsure about this kind of work really – they're not used to it. So we do get a mixed response. 8:00

*AP: As well as walking around, how do you test how you are going to deal with the audience?*

LC: If you actually think of the group (audience) we are working with, they'll be about 25 strong, and we (Slung Low) have got a group of 35, so in terms of testing it out on this site we have enough bodies to do that. And then we also have a tech, a dress (rehearsal), and then a preview with people who are an audience but they're also aware that they're coming to a preview and that there might not be as smooth as it will be in the actual performance. But then also we've got the experience of having done these things before using a similar model so we know how audiences will move and react, and there's always someone who's a lot slower, some people can't walk as fast, and you have to accommodate all those things so it's part experience and then we physically try it out in the location.

*AP: What are the biggest technical challenges or problems that you have to deal with on the day of the performance?*

LC: It's about timings, and placing things – so as an audience are moving certain things have to appear and disappear at certain points so physically the bodies and the people getting the timing right – and if something holds up or something happens – for instance the van is towing the caravan somewhere if it got stuck or something it has a knock-on effect on everything else so it's more about the timings and people to put things in the places. It's not so much the actor and the audience because they're constantly moving its about everything that's happening round about it that needs to go here and here especially when we were doing seven shows and setting stuff all over the city – we've had the situation where we've set stuff and someone's nicked it – that kind of thing happens as well.

*AP: And how do you control all of that – a master time-line?*

LC: Yeah its a schedule – who needs to be where. *AP: Down to the seconds and the minutes?* LC: Yes. And that's why we practice it and you'll see it's interesting to see what happens behind the scenes – you'll see someone running in a lobster costume and then the next minute they'll be setting something somewhere else. Its quite complex and everybody is relying on everybody else to put that thing in place, do that key thing at that key time.

*AP: Its interesting that all this happens for the benefit of this relatively small audience, and also that in a conventional theatre it all happens backstage – so no one else sees the man in the lobster costume running.*

LC: Yes – and someone jumping from a building and that kind of thing – so there's a lot more people than the audience that interact with it, and likewise the audience often think that members of the public are part of it – they'll say afterwards 'wow that was amazing that guy turned up at the right time with those dogs' and we're thinking 'we don't know anything about a guy with dogs!'. So there's quite a lot of that going on.



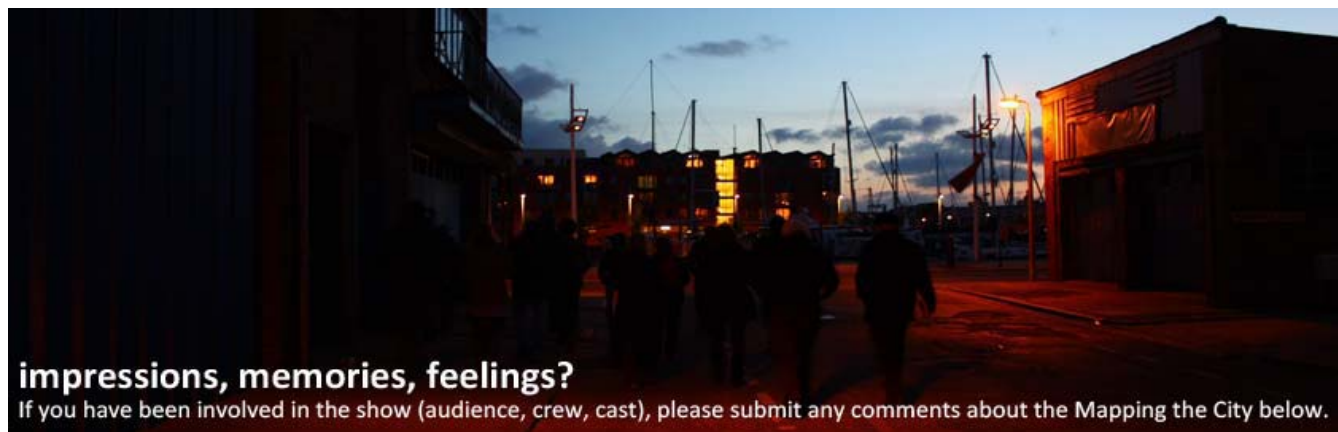
*AP: There's quite a bit of debate at the moment about documenting – what should be produced as a document of performance. How do you view the documentation of performances? And how do you do it?*

LC: For us the records and things that we have are normally visuals – we always commission a photographer that comes in for a couple of rehearsal days with us and then performances as well as an actual record and documentation in that sense. And there's usually artefacts that are associated with productions that we do, for example 'They only come at night' there was the whole online world and then we also had a graphic novel that was produced as well so although it's not documenting the performance as such, it's documenting the piece and the process as well. We do tend to try and put in a point where the audience can feedback as well – in 'Small worlds' we had postcards for the audience to write down their thoughts, and for 'They only come at night' we had a guestbook because people were being taken on a tour – so it was as if you were filling in the tour book at the end. 'Beyond the frontline' we actually had a big truck at the end that was set up with all these tables and postcards and people could write to the soldiers themselves and then we sent all those postcards out to the soldiers – so those kind of things although they're not necessarily... I mean there's the traditional things- we have flyer, we have a programme we have those things but we always think it's important to document visually the process that we go through.

*AP: Just really to finish off- I wanted to ask how you're how you're feeling about it? Are you nervous about anything?*

LC: (laughs) It will all be fine, that's what I always say. Because it's new, until all the company gets here, and all the actors and we've seen it all work together there's always an element of nerves. Actually I always feel until the audience is there, until the audience come in. It's step by step- its us arriving (the company and creative team) then you think- we're getting on with it, then all the actors and performers arriving and the community group coming. So it's in stages, but I won't relax until we have an audience and until we're at the end of it basically. So a few sleepless nights!





Mapping the City was a significant event for Hull as well as a huge undertaking for the company Slung Low, who pieced together three interwoven stories using the streets and warehouses of the city. Over the coming weeks this research project will be sifting through fragments, artefacts, and memories of the show - to try and better understand how 'Mapping the City' might have changed the way we think about the places and spaces used in the performance.

If you would prefer to contact the research team directly using email, please do so using: [recite@shef.ac.uk](mailto:recite@shef.ac.uk)

Adam Park, School of Architecture, University of Sheffield

Your Name:

E-mail (optional):

What was your involvement in Mapping the City? *(drop-down menu of options)*

*(Audience - ticket, audience - invited guest, crew / production, performer)*

Where did you come from to be involved? (please enter first part of home postcode only, eg: HU1)

If you were a member of the audience member, how did you hear about the show? *(drop-down menu of options)*

*Professional involvement (eg. reviewing), A friend in the cast / crew, advertised at Hull Truck Theatre, Flyer, Word of mouth, Other*

How well would you say you know Hull before being involved in Mapping the City? *(drop-down menu of options)*

*Very well - I've lived or worked here, Quite well - I've visited Hull many times before, Not very well - I've visited Hull a few times before, Not at all - This was the first time I have been to the city*

What were your most memorable moments of the performance(s)? *(open response)*

Did the performance(s) affect the way in which you looked at the city? ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

If yes, can you describe this? *(open response)*

Finally, please leave any general comments relating to the three parts of the performance. These might relate to a specific moment or place in the performance, or simply how it made you feel to be involved in the event. *(open response)*

Part 1: William, after Sarah (written by Jenny Worton)

Part 2: Where it all goes (written by Matthew David Scott)

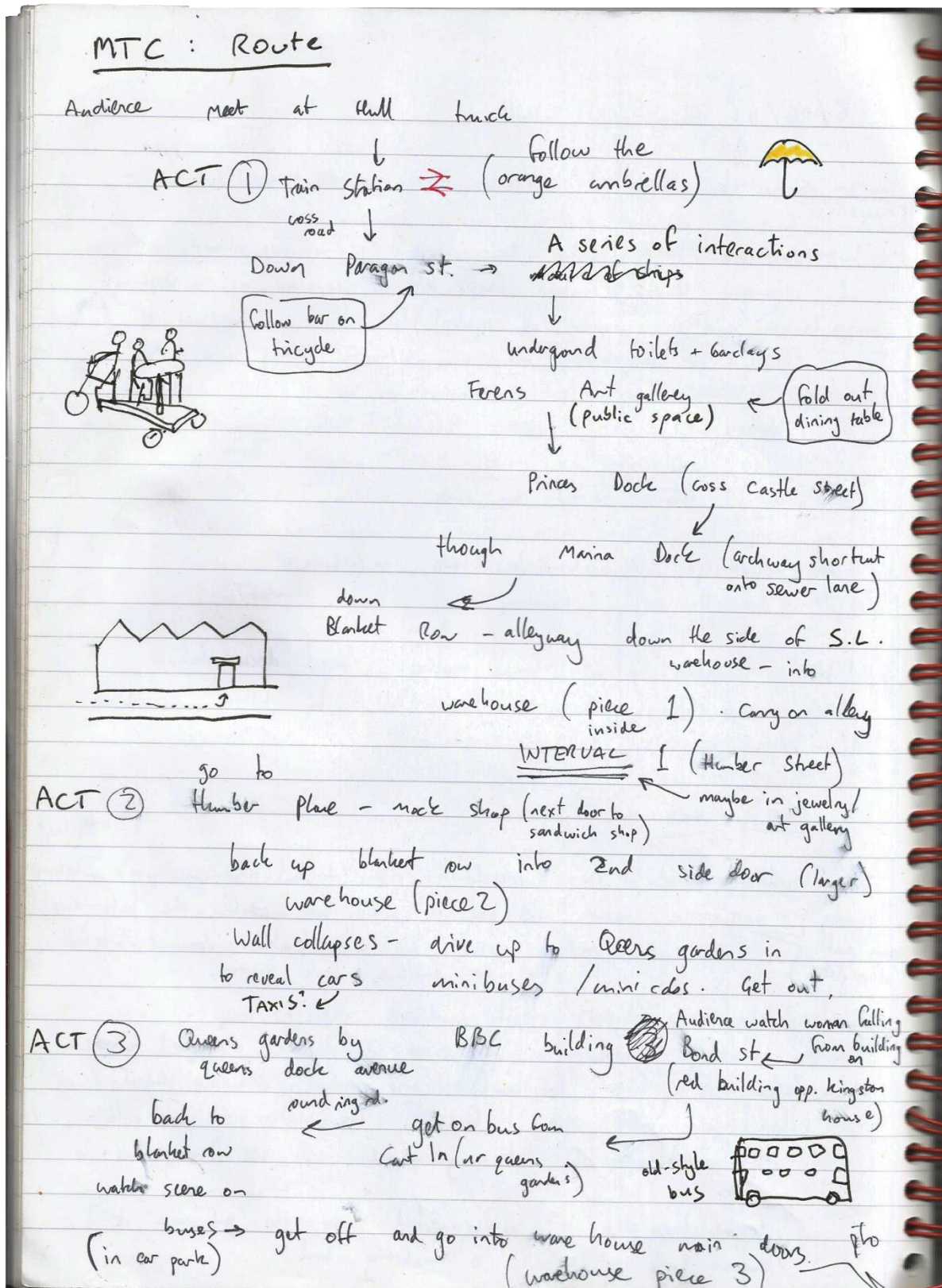
Part 3: Time and the City (written by James Phillips)

**Submit comments**

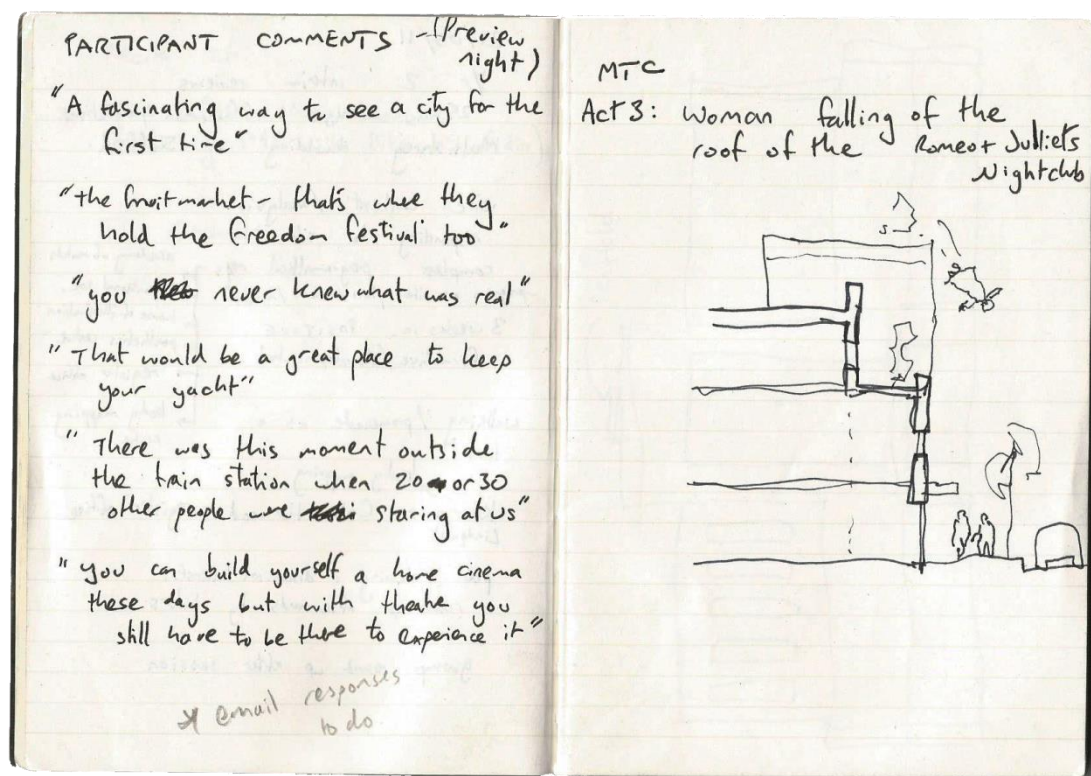
*(directed respondents to page thanking them for their response and providing further details about the research)*

*Note: this questionnaire was optimised for the RECITE website in May 2011, and has been reproduced for this appendix with a different layout and additional explanatory notes.*





Sample of notes and sketches made during the initial engagement with Slung Low in the development phase of Mapping the City (April 2011).



Sample of notes and sketches made during the preview night performance of Mapping the City (May 2011).



## **Britt Jurgensen, Director of the Anfield Home Tour**

*5<sup>th</sup> February 2013 – Homebaked Bakery Anfield, Liverpool*

*Adam Park: Im interested in how people can participate or 'act' in the regeneration process. My research is suggesting that participation might start by knowing a place, and how artists and performances can connect people with local stories. I have been on the tour and read the notes, but wondered how you reflect on it now that the Biennial has finished - both as a piece of theatre and a community project?*

Britt Jurgensen: It's very difficult for me to separate the actual tour from this (the bakery project) – the reason I made the tour was my involvement in this, so I might have to... *AP: No that's fine I understand that they sit together.* BJ: As a theatre-maker, or in my position as an artist I am very pleased with that piece, and also very pleased with it retrospectively, because I think we had an aim to give people a clearer understanding of the context – people that were coming from outside, and also the necessity of this (the bakery) and I think we managed to do that and to a certain degree kick-started a process of people knowing about it, hearing about it, hearing the story, talking about it, it being in the newspaper and so on. So that's one area of it that's probably about visibility, that it quite necessary because I think what I think is happening here is that people have no idea so they come here maybe to the match or whatever they know about Anfield and they see these rows of houses and they've no idea why, and there's often I think an assumption made that "oh well the people who live there must have let it go to decay".

So that was a really interesting part of it, the other one was that for this project equated a certain amount of... there's a lot of visitors coming through, so for us it created a lot of.. together with the Kickstarter (funding campaign) which started right afterwards... it's something that has to do with strengthening the motivation to keep on going – it's hard to keep on going, pride in what we achieved, and also the ability to see something with other people's eyes – so to go "this is actually quite extraordinary" or "this actually matters to more people than just us". But I think you should ask the people involved in it rather than me, but I would presume that telling your story – or I've heard from people that were in it, like Sue and Fred, - it was important to be able to tell the story so I think that if you want to use the esoteric term 'healing process' in being able to talk about it - to a certain point and then not – there was also a moment where it was "now its enough of talking about it". [4.25]

*AP: And as a political statement - how do you feel it worked – in terms of provoking a response from politicians, people higher up in local decision-making?*

BJ: I think if you saw it as just a piece by itself, that doesn't lead here (to the bakery) I don't know if it would do a lot. These kind of things always work on a very individual level, so there a couple of people on it – not enough - but some people were on it who sit in those positions and who went: "I have never thought about it that way around, I have never thought about it from thinking about the people that lived through it" and if they thought about it they are being shouted at by people so they are constantly in the position of defending themselves and I think what we managed to do with this piece – and Im quite happy about – I don't think it ever was like that (preaching you should do this or that) it was creating the sense that these are people like you, they're not that different and they are suffering to a certain degree but also they are not victims. So on an individual basis maybe that might have changed certain things. What I think that it did was created a lot of visibility that now makes it a little be more difficult for them to pretend that we're not there. So if there wasn't any sustainable thing underneath it that is going on it might have not done very much but because it came together with this (the bakery) it created for this a sense of "we are here" and it helped that we were very successful inside of the 'prestigious' Biennial.

*AP: Am I right that you are from Anfield?*

BJ: I'm not from here but I live here – I've lived here the last 3 years. What this project helped me understand – and I think also other people that are in the group – is the importance of narratives, and which narrative to use when. I don't know if you ever saw the Kickstarter narrative? Yes So I wrote that as well, and then Jeff in a way performed it in front of the camera. And of course its also the narrative but its told in a different way because... so the bakery has a different narrative that's slightly more cute and slightly more friendly and slightly more easy to engage with which is dangerous because everybody now talks about the bakery although the most important thing about it is the housing which is also the thing which is much more difficult and also for the city much more difficult to accept. And also for us it's much more complex, much more close to home, excuse the pun. People get afraid.

*AP: Perhaps as well it is much more contested by various power structures therefore bringing in criticism or an alternative view is more difficult.*

BJ: And I also think that it's scary to think that your ground, the place that you live in and the fear of that being taken away in some way or changed or whatever. It's easier to talk about bread (laughs). So the narrative is very important. [09.50]

*AP: You mentioned having the intention of raising awareness and bringing these issues to the fore, did you speak to people who completed the tour during the biennial and get any feedback that the intention was 'achieved'?*

(Asks Fred) When we talked to people who went on the tour – was there a sense that they learnt something was has happened here that they didn't know? (Fred nods). Yes.

BJ: I think that and also the fact that they didn't feel they were being preached at. No definitely. I think they also went on an emotional journey. (Fred – many people said that). And in making it that's what we wanted to do – we wanted to start off light and invite people in. So that's the knowledge of making theatre – you know you want people to love you first and then you can go quite far.

*AP: That's where Im quite interested in this 'method' or practice; the ability of theatre-makers to be able to do that in ways that are perhaps more subtle than in other forms of participation – it can go further than other forms of participation.*

BJ: Yes and people also want to be entertained to a certain degree – you want an experience. Going on a bus is an experience, if you put something like that together you have to think about the lighter moments – I was very specific about who the performer would be. But I didn't come up with this it was Jeanne's (van Heeswijk) idea to have a tour, and she just said "you just make it". And Graham (plays Carl the tour guide) made that – it needed someone like Graham to make that happen.

*AP: He was incredibly engaging. And I think (at least on the tour that I was on) there were a lot of people who were quite shocked that it was a scripted role and that he wasn't somebody who just came from the project. I wondered about that decision – as an artistic decision as much as anything else – how would you respond to the idea that some people perhaps felt a little bit 'cheated'?*

BJ: I think they would (feel a bit cheated), that's why I wrote the director's note because I wanted to make sure that people know that, so that they don't find it out in a conversation with people necessarily. I don't know – I do think that in a way it's quite important because it tells you that everything is... that there is no truth about things. This is a particular narrative that we told from a very particular direction. The narrative that the regeneration office that you went to this morning tells you is also manipulative and they are also performing – they're performing one particular side of things – so we are performing something else. Even Fred (one of the residents who featured in the tour) was performing – he chose a very particular story to tell and how to tell that. So in a way even though that (Carl being a scripted character) sits a bit uncomfortably, it's quite



important that that's the case. There's a very practical reason that it would take a lot longer and be a lot more complex to work with someone who's not a performer on holding a performance. It's fine if they hold their own ground and I love working with people who do that because they can and everybody can – it's quite interesting to see people's qualities and how they also get into that – but to hold an entire thing together in terms of responsibility; of always being there, of being there with me writing it, it means that if I had to explain all the rules of theatre-making to someone it would have been much more complex and we didn't have enough time for that. [15.20]

*AP: With people like Fred and some of the other storytellers, did recruitment just happen through the bakery? how did you go about finding people who were willing to tell their stories?*

BJ: I remember Fred at some point... I don't remember know how it happened – (to Fred) you told me that story and I really like that story so I said "I wonder if you would want to". Of course the people that I engaged through the bakery are the people I know the best therefore they're mostly caring about the project – because it's a lot of time to give, and even though they got – or were offered – volunteer expenses for their time, it's still a lot of emotional investment that I think people did because they are really embedded in this project. I talked to a lot of other people, and therefore I gave a lot of these stories from other people to Graham to tell – so he told some of these – passing them on.

*AP: In terms of Graham using the words of others, were they willing for them to be embellished – they knew that was part of the process?*

BJ: Yes. And we also passed the writing by the people involved – and asked them if that was ok. Also there is a lot of stories that we didn't use, because they were too personal and I don't think people can hear it – its nearly too much. I think it's that moment where you have to be careful that people don't close down because they feel that they're being manipulated by a story that is just a little bit too... Although I'd really like to tell that because people fucking died around here because they couldn't handle leaving – like old people who couldn't handle leaving their house, because they were moved to a different place and didn't survive it. I don't think you can tell something like that – I couldn't.

*AP: And having collected all of these stories – one of the metaphors I'm using in my research is about creating maps of a place – the regeneration plan or the existing plan tells one story but its written by someone who has a certain intention – but this type of performance is a different map. So I'm wondering whether you see that 'map' just existing for those Saturday mornings (the performances during the Biennial) or whether it can be read by other people?*

BJ: We've been thinking about how to translate the Anfield Home tour into something that is more of a documentation and as it is with theatre and live experience is very difficult to do that – you can't just film it for example. You can read the script – as many people did – but it's not the same as the experience I think. *AP: I did feel it was quite generous providing the script on the website.* BJ: That's good.

I think the next step might become more of an installation-based thing which is still and experience – you can only experience it live. Jeanne's idea at the moment is to translate it into an installation with some of the film footage and artefacts – the bricks and so on – that stay from that. But when you say 'mapping' – I think about that a lot at the moment. I've now started working with Jeanne on a different project and I've listened a lot and talked to a lot of people who do this – I was just down at a conference in Brixton about regeneration and art – and this mapping process is something that many people are very interested in. It's a lot of recording people's stories and personal stories and so on which creates a certain amount of visibility and that is great but its 'software' and I have the feeling that if you don't dare to go for the hardware which for example I hope this (the bakery) can do – then I'm not sure how much that (mapping) will actually do in terms of really reclaiming

public space for example, or really changing the way regeneration is done – of really having a say in it. Because in telling your story you become a bit more visible but it doesn't help you have a say in it necessarily.

*AP: This is where my research questions come in –because I agree with you, and I think that a lot of the rhetoric that goes with this type of art can talk a lot about community transformation, and I'm interested in (A) does it really happen, (B) how can we judge whether it happens and (C) how does it relate to the art practice itself – is the success or failure of the artwork dependent on it? And it's a good point about this idea of recording stories and what impact this is having.*

I'm sure it is having an impact – I think we also have to be careful not to overestimate what we can plan ahead. There is a tendency in artists to be afraid of attacking things like legislation – what I would call 'hardware'. Like "that's not our place", "we shouldn't go there" or "that's not really where we belong" I would say "screw that!" (laughs). So I would feel very different about this piece if I wasn't volunteering working on this (the bakery). *Sure, that's very clear.* And that's because here I'm a resident before I'm an artist.

*AP: The bakery is clearly product of lots of different people's work it's not a piece of art that you (or Jeanne) would stand behind and say "I created this".* BJ: No it's definitely not. So think the recording of stories is a really important first step, and then there's ways of thinking about how... I think you should talk to Jeanne.

...

BJ: That's what her work does – I feel that I can learn a lot from her. One thing that's interesting to me is that she's not afraid of going there (legislation etc.) as well. [24.20]

*AP: And in terms of your theatre-making is there something that leads on from the Home Tour?*

BJ: At the moment I don't actually work in theatre, I'm not actually that interested. I'm interested in using that skill for things that are... things that everybody does at the moment – go over different media – fine artists will use performance etc. – I am much more interested in that. And now I'm collaborating with Jeanne on a different performance that's down in Cambridge. *AP: Is that also community-based?* BJ: Yes. It's very different, but it's the creation of an event which has a performative element to it.

*AP: I will definitely talk to Jeanne to get her perspective –as an overview.* BJ: It would be really nice if you wanted to talk to Sue and Fred for instance because I'd be interested to hear what their...

*AP: In terms of getting audience feedback it was more conversational – immediately afterwards.*

BJ: We never attempted to record anything like surveys or anything like that – also (laughing) I guess because you're likely to do that if you get Arts Council funding. I think I got some emails from people who enjoyed it – I can collect them if it helps you and let you see them.

*AP: Yes it might be - and I or you could contact them to see if they would be willing to donate those words. There is definitely another question about whether those methods – surveys and things – are even effective – it might be that somebody has a feeling about it 6 months down the line, just walking down the street.*

BJ: I think so - or when they walk down this street and go "it looks different now". That's what I would always hope about site-specific work is that it changes the way you see – it definitely does for me. *AP: I don't think you could ever walk down a street that you'd been down with Graham and see it the same way* (Britt laughs).

BJ: But even Graham can't (see it the same way) – that's the interesting thing about it – that feeling that by doing it he became part of the project – he has an investment in it and so does Debbie (writer) who wasn't originally involved – so they stayed. And Graham has moments where he says "oh my god I do feel like I grew up here". We had friends of his who came who have known him for a long time and the entire time through

were saying “I couldn’t believe that Graham grew up here” – which he didn’t – he grew up in Birkenhead. That confused many people – and him.

...

*AP: I don’t know if this is actually relevant and you’ve already talked about it in a way – but I wanted to ask about any kind of resistance to the story that you were telling.*

BJ: Yes massively so – I that Arena (Housing Association) hates us for example. They probably hated us before that but.. I think that was particularly disconcerting for people (laughs) who are councillors or also Arena was the amount of press and also being able to separate that... (but we said) “look come on the tour the experience is very different from reading a newspaper article about it”. We don’t have any particular power over journalists – I only had one who let me read it (before publishing) – nobody else responded. I think they (Arena etc) just got really scared of getting that much bad press – which coincided with Channel 4, and so on, which doesn’t have anything to do with us.

*AP: I thought it was interesting talking to Arena – and how they said that nobody understands the detail of what’s happening – and its in that absence of information that the tour has been quite successful in generating that publicity, because they (Arena and the Council) haven’t really explained the rationale – and they see a lot of misunderstanding if what’s happening in the area.*

BJ: Yes there’s an incredible lack of clarity. *AP: And even when I was looking today the information on the website was dated from 2003 - and since then there has been a fundamental shift in everything – local politics and so on.*

It’s really sad to see there’s such a lack of... Nobody ever apologised. The Council will say “it wasn’t us – it was another Council before us” but that’s not the point. Or not even apologise but at least admit that this was a pretty disastrous mistake in the first place; fine you didn’t mean to but at least can somebody hear that (admission). That the resistance that people had to it wasn’t completely... that they weren’t just difficult people. Because that it still how people here are portrayed – as difficult. People that stall the process. [33.00]

*AP: My interpretation is that perhaps they downplayed what it might be like to live through the transformation – they always talk about what it will be like – in 5, 10, 15 year and time keeps slipping*

BJ: Yes they make it sound like it’s all for the community but it’s not – for me at least. This policy was about money – it even said it was about money – it actually calls itself ‘Market Renewal’ for a very particular reason – it was about the market and not about the community, and this incredible belief that if the market recovers then the community will follow – which I question (laughs).

*AP: And you think that the tour does question that?* BJ: Yes it does quite openly question that – however it is in no way as extreme as my personal thought about that – we did hold back a lot of things. But we’re not an activist group – we’re not here to resist we’re here to invite people to work together in changing something – providing a way of doing that, living with and working with something and you need to invite people you can’t exclude them. So in a way we can’t even exclude Arena – or I would partly exclude Arena because if we include them then lots of other people would not trust us anymore. So I think strategically about that – I don’t want to work with LFC too closely – with the supporters but not with the club because people will not trust you. It’s so multi-layered, complex and difficult.

*AP: And getting that balance between being an activist or not being seen as an activist is another area of interest in this type of arts practice – which can at times be seen as benign or fun – and then at other times has the ability to be more challenging.*

BJ: Yes there's a whole context around this art-making - this was commissioned by the Biennial, the Biennial gets funding from the city council. There's a whole structure of engagement that is important to understand and acknowledge – it's very good that LCC keeps on funding the Biennial event though they criticise them. So there's all sorts of things to look at and that's a very positive one, and very daring in a way.

*AP: Yes its important to recognise the context of the Biennial. And its very difficult for this type of art to get off the ground just by itself.*

BJ: It's possible. But by working with an organisation like the Biennial you also challenge them – part of your art practice should be to challenge those institutions (Shannon Jackson – the myth of the independent artist).

A lot of my theatre practice has always been very architectural – so I'm fascinated by space – a lot of the practice I do just for me is very physical, based on a thing called Body Weather which is a certain way of working with space and environment – and the story that a place tells even without the people in it. I'm really interested in that intersection between architecture, urban planning and theatre.

*AP: Like you say there is a large body of people crossing over between those territories, but it tends to be done on quite a philosophical or theoretical level. I'm interested in where it becomes grounded – where there is real regeneration, real politics and real people – and what happens when you pour this quite reactive ingredient (site-specific performance) into that context.*

BJ: I realised working with people from a fine art background for example, people that make theatre know about working with a lot of people constantly – which is a skill in itself that you would never know about. It's a big thing. *AP: Whereas architects and designers are known for trying to shut it the mess of reality!*

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[Interview interrupted by a woman walking in looking for the bakery – Britt explains how it will be opening as a proper bakery in June – and inviting her to their Valentine's day party. ]

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*AP: One of the things that stands out about this project is how different it was to a typical Biennial project; it was long, involved a lot of people.* BJ: It's the first time that they've done anything like that. But that's Jeanne – she does what she does and challenges people to do it. For them (the Biennial) they've gained a lot from it – but its also scary for them. Because you never have a fixed budget – it goes on and on. *AP: And it becomes merged with community work – to the point where they might question if it is still 'art'.* BJ: Yes I'm sure many people do – and Homebaked will at some point be independent. But one thing that Lorrie Peakes (the Biennial public art curator) did is be very clear in standing behind this group – if someone questions us she'd say "I've read it and if anything take it out on me but not on them". She's very fair.

We've talked very little about the process of making it – but that might not be in the field of your interest. How do we write etc.

*AP: Yes you mentioned in the directors note the importance of driving around and being on site – that's quite interesting, certainly from the perspective of being a practioner of any sort in the urban environment – is that something that you would always do on this type of project – spend so much time on site.*

BJ: Yes. And it was interesting that Debbie has never worked with theatre before – she's a novelist, its very interesting that between the three of us – write it. And the pieces that Fred or Sue did were very independent in the sense that they knew happened around it. In a way they were the simplest thing about it – they just told their story and me or Debbie or together wrote it down, read it back to them but we didn't change many of their words. They didn't change massively even from the very first time that they told it.

## **Fred Brown, Anfield Home Tour performer (and member of Homebaked)**

*5<sup>th</sup> February 2013 – Homebaked Bakery, Anfield, Liverpool*

*Adam Park: How did you first become involved in the project?*

Fred Brown: I was working as a volunteer up at the local Neighbourhood Council, and they had got involved with the '2 up 2 down' project. We came to see what was going on because they were involved in regeneration. I had a background interest over the years and in youth work, so I was just interested in keeping an eye on what was going on. When the installation happened on Grantham Road as part of the City of Culture 2010 – it was something that had been created by young people using the bay windows of the empty houses. It was on for about 5 nights and I chose to go down just to listen to what people were saying about it...

...so I kept keeping an eye on what was going on and I heard about the design group of young people who meet here (the bakery) and there was a whole process that was going on with that – and I think I'd heard on the grapevine that people were talking about it opening up as a bakery again, and that really appealed to me. I'd never really used Mitchell's when it was a bakery but I certainly knew of its existence – I don't remember the cakes so much, but I remember the pies were quite tasty! So I thought "that sounds about right – that'll do for me". It's got a community development basis, which I've always been interested in, it's got an arts basis which I'm interested in, it's got a really interesting premise about remaking something that had decided to close down. So there's a lot of things going on – certainly when I read the stuff to do with the Biennial – bringing together the arts, people and place – I thought "that just ticks all three boxes in one". And the potential for it was just amazing. So I came down one winters evening and there was a meeting on – and they said "are you coming in" and I said I was interested in being a part of it.

*AP: How many people are involved now?*

FB: At different levels there are probably about 30 I would imagine. There's a hard core of about 10 or 12. I like to imagine it's a baker's dozen, which wouldn't be too far wrong! The involvement was then a natural one, because people were talking the same or similar languages and there was very much a 'welcoming in' of both me as an individual and of ideas and a freeing up of space for ideas to be heard was such a good thing – there's no hierarchy there. Obviously some people had things like keys to the door and stuff like that – people who have been involved for longer. But there's still that space for me to be able to say "can we do this, can we do that" or "I'd like to have a go at that". At the same time that all that new stuff was happening, the group who were working on the design process (2Up2Down) were doing a storming job of pulling stuff together - a group of young women –who were really keen to do it and they talked about and looked at the space – and worked at ideas for managing the space and what might happen. At the same time as being able to bring other people in (to bring ideas) about what the design of the space might be.

*AP: In terms of your role in the tour, were you approached by Jeanne and Britt?*

FB: I'd been having just a general conversation – we'd talked about things that were going on in the area. I was able to tell that particular story (that was used on the tour) about this particular individual coming down for this publicity stunt. It wasn't long after that Britt asked me if I fancied including it in the tour.

*AP: And you were happy to be a part of it? Yes. Because obviously that's your house that overlooks the demolition – what affect has that had on your everyday life?*

FB: It's actually been there from when the whole thing started; obviously I was there when the demolition was starting. I mentioned that particular story that was from the second part of the demolition but seeing all the houses come down – the ones opposite me - and seeing the new ones go up – so it was on a day-to-day basis. I

really kicked myself almost on a daily basis that I didn't do time-lapse photography on it – get it going down and going up. But the thing that sticks with me all the time – is from 7 in the morning you've got these big forklift trucks that carry all of the materials around the site – half past 7 in the morning (whistles to imitate reversing beep) the reverse horn goes off – it like your alarm clock. It's that sort of thing – I was against the process happening but it's been a fascinating process seeing the demolition, and also watching the way that the new-builds happen. And interestingly on the tour we were able to watch it on a weekly basis.

*AP: So it was different each week.*

FB: Yes – I think I mentioned on the last of the tours that when we first started the tours there was hardly anything – just foundations. And now they're pretty much – they're not occupied yet but they will be fairly soon. That was a revelation that just occurred to me. *AP: And how did you find it having a conversation with a minibus full of strangers?* FB: It was really weird because I couldn't see anybody – it had tinted windows. I could see Alan (the driver) and Graham (who plays Carl, the guide) and maybe one other person but I couldn't see anybody else – so there might have been family on there and I wouldn't have known it! That was odd. We wanted to try and keep it so that it was actually from my gate, but sometimes we had to move up and down , but we were never more than 10ft away - and the story was valid from wherever it was told from.

*AP: In that re-telling it again and again did you feel that it was still your story at the end?*

FB: Yes – and you know why – the bit about being invited in to see my friend's wallpaper (Fred's story also tells of the strange intimacy of seeing bedroom wallpaper as the houses were being demolished) – that only happened halfway through the tour, because I only realised it was one of the things that happened with the demolition was that you got to see everybody's choice of wallpaper up and down the street. I thought – “that's not right”. That wasn't there (in the tour) from the very beginning.

*AP: And are you still involved in the bakery?*

FB: Yes. One of the interesting things for me – or will be - is the development of a community land trust. And I think that's a really fascinating, potentially enormous project to be involved in. It doesn't take anything away from the Bakery – there's the potential for showing what this could do as a bakery – but it could also enhance the work of the community land trust that looks towards developing community-owned assets in the area. And that's a really strong, powerful response to the negative stuff that's happened with the regeneration. All the stuff that people said “ we're going to do this, we're going to do that” it's been such an opportunity to go against all that with a positive note. **We're** doing this. **We're** doing a community land trust. **We're** doing a bakery. Certainly as far as the process is concerned - on a national level - just to be able to say “This is the way to do it. It will be different where you are but this a way”. And it's the core things of trust and integrity. It's a good opportunity to enjoy the sense of ridiculousness of what's going on.

*AP: Did the community land trust pre-exist the Biennial stuff?*

FB: As soon as here (the Bakery) was recognised as being viable, I think the community land trust was starting to develop - but nationally there are actually organisations that are there to promote community land trusts. I get the feeling they were pretty much about the same time, so at the same time as the 2Up2Down was happening, the community land trust was happening...people still call it (the bakery) Mitchell's and it's a 100-year-old tradition – baking here. For me, its almost to say – “we're going to be baking but in a different way”. So it isn't just about restarting the old ovens but it's actually going through a whole different building process. And I don't just mean the physical building process but as an organisation. The slogan that we've come up with “Brick by brick, loaf by loaf we build ourselves” but that's exactly what the process is. And certainly when you look at the idea that you bake bread, and you also bake bricks...I find it personally quite powerful. We have a good bit of arguing which is quite healthy – difference of opinion is just a great thing to be happening really, it just making sure that people don't take things that are said against them personally.

## Jeanne van Heeswijk, Initiator of the Anfield Home Tour (and Homebaked)

23rd April 2013 - Sheffield School of Architecture, Sheffield

*Adam Park: I'm interested in tools for encouraging or enabling people to act in the processes of regeneration, and I'm looking at a particular toolset, which is about performing. I've been working with site-specific theatre makers, I've worked with a performer in Sheffield whose been doing a tour taking people along the canal, and various other types of guided tour with mobile phones and headphones. It's all about these 'other ways of performing' that provide a new way of knowing a site. So while I'm interested in the Anfield Home Tour in particular, I'm also interested in the context of the project and the way that you described things such as the Home Tour as a certain moment that distilled and 'captured' the essence of the Anfield project.*

*The first question is about how the Home Tour was initiated. Was it a product of the individuals involved or was it always your idea to introduce this performance?*

Jeanne van Heeswijk: It was not always the idea, these kinds of things come out of the processes that are happening and also learning about the situation. The idea to make a tour really came from this question at some point that Homebaked and with that the bakery should be part of the Biennial Festival. We talked a lot within the group about the ways that this project is represented, and the way that it's part of a Biennial structure and how to relate to that and audiences that come through that focus of 'art' to look at what's happening there. That was happening at the same time as a lot of questioning within the Biennial Board about was this project 'art'. They quite often said "we're not into housing", "we're not into a bakery", or "we're not into any of that", I thought it also might be a good moment to actually make a piece about the project - so to turn it around - the project's not the piece (of art) but to make a piece around the project. Then I started looking at what kind of skillsets that we had around the project. At that time I also said that if the project would be presented at the Biennial Festival it could only be in a way that the people could present themselves, and not me representing them in some form. This self-presentation or self-performing would be very important. Coming up with the tour was this idea of a performative narrative.

*AP: And it was a very powerful tool in terms of its affect on somebody who was new to the area. How important was it to put a public face on the project – and your projects in general? Is 'another' audience (beyond the community) always part of your work?*

4:25

Not in the way we did it at Anfield. This was particularly the case because it was the (right) moment. A lot of my projects have moments of performative action, discursive platforms, some kind of play or public moment. But for this one it was very much the moment to bridge the idea of a Biennial festival audience. And for me the reason why that was so important was also because it was about time that these daily narrative became a more 'grand narrative'. Also for the people to understand that the struggle that they are fighting is actually a monumental struggle in itself. This idea of 'monumental narratives' are very important in order for communities to grasp their situation. So I think the tool worked to create a narrative that they could embody, that they could carry. And they needed that in order to understand their position, and in order to understand that what they are doing is, for a lot of people, also new and interested. It worked like that and also worked as a big moment of publicity, and to publicise oneself is also a very important of learning how to become a citizen – how can you tell your personal story but in the light of a more communal narrative - so to publicise yourself in relation to others is also quite important for this notion of sustainability.

Why a tour? Because I always look at what skillsets are available – so Britt (Jurgensen) is a resident but she happens to be a theatre-maker who also worked on this more 'locative' (site-specific) theatre, and Debbie

Morgan who is Liverpool born and bred and just had her first book out, and then a lot of people like Fred (Brown) who has his poetry and imagery. These people just exist.

*AP: The way I'm looking at this range of practices is to consider them as 'opportunistic' or tactical – that they operate within a political or social moment.*

But opportunistic sounds very negative – how do you mean 'opportunistic' – using the existing current or momentum?

*AP: Momentum certainly – the idea of taking advantage of certain social or political conditions that exist in order to turn it around into something positive. A lot of the previous work that I have done with Doina (Petrescu) was around the idea of a tactical practice that uses certain conditions in the city to operate...*

JvH: With the tour it was absolutely momentum – what we did to use the Biennial Festival very effectively in that sense. Almost all of the newspapers, even the New York Times, it became such a grand narrative to an extent that I sometimes even regret it, because it took away some of the energy from some of the struggle around the housing. And that had a lot to do not only with the tours, because I think the tours were still a lot about the story of the houses and the neighbourhood. And the bakery is part of that too, and we have beautiful slogans “brick by brick, loaf by loaf we build ourselves”, “we will rise”, so it became very much about the struggle that still needs to be done on the ground.

*AP: But it's about balancing.* JvH: Yes it's about balancing. Sue Bell Yank, a LA based critic, did this reading of the popularity of project in the media, and she quoted Ultrared, an art and activist group, saying that people often perceive themselves through what the media says about them. So it's very important to work on self-perception, but that is of course a construction of the world, so you cannot change the world without changing the perception – within changing the self-perception of people (in the world), you also change the world. So it goes hand in hand. In that sense it (the tour) worked very well, but it almost worked too well, because everybody was starting to live that narrative, and it also took away a lot of time and energy from the parts of the project that were less '

[JvH Note: Ultrared also said of socially-engaged work, “It's not just changing our perception of our world, it's changing the world we perceive.” In fact it must do both: change perception, and the world, for one follows the other, Sue Bell Yank in 2Up2down/homebaked and the symbolic Media Narrative]

*AP: That's kind of the way that Britt described it – she said that the bakery was the 'cuddly' face of the project. Yes it has a high cuteness factor. And the tour was initially this tool that was supposed to inject humour and narrative but then it had this sharp tail. Yes. I wondered how internally the Biennial commissioners responded to that publicity.*

JvH: I think the Biennial in general were quite happy with that. We scripted in criticality – sometimes if you work with local stories it can become quite sentimental, so we wanted it to have that critical edge. But we always worked closely with people from the Biennial to sit in and look at the script and collectively decide – because it should also not just be a rant against local politicians or something like that. Although some local politicians took the (media) rumour around it – no local politicians went on the tour but the articles made out that we were some sort of radical activists. If you were on the tour you would not describe it as radical 'pamphletist' activism. I think it was an interesting balance between personal stories and even a bit of sentiment versus some political themes. And we fact-checked almost everything – so everything in the tour was factually right and really happened or was really based on real stories. The only person who was not real was the tour guide. Which hardly anybody believed at the end – even himself! But all of the people who he referred to as his uncle and aunt and nephews etc. – those stories were real stories.



*I gathered. The immediate sense afterwards was one of disbelief that this was a scripted character, which obviously the director's note dealt with. But there was still a sense of people (at least those I talked to) of being quite upset that he (Carl) didn't exist. Or he was a construct of many stories.*

*You talked about the meta level media narrative – you as an artist have a process of documenting and re-representing your work – whether it's the tour, the bakery, 2Up 2 Down. The cake. How do you do that process of documenting this type of complex project – just through writing and photography?*

JvH: These processes have moments of colliding into a format, and that format in itself gets a certain shape. So it can be a more theoretical book, or an essay, it can be a tour, a cake, maybe some architectural drawings. There are many forms, and I think lecturing is a form of presenting it so that's how I deal with complex projects – piece by piece or thing by thing. We had been filming the tour, hoping that we could create a document from that that could be shown on different occasions, but it didn't work. Partly because it was too documentary, or perhaps because it doesn't work as a film or a single 'piece'. Now we are thinking about – for instance with the 2 Up 2 Down project – if I could create something of an exhibition with all of the different artefacts, with an audio tour that you could visit like in natural history museums. So you might have two stones, and you get part of the story of the stones. So there are things that come out of the process that can be used as artefacts almost like an archaeological dig, through which you understand an era of time in a certain location. I'm playing with that now as a format to tell the story in other locations because there's a lot to learn from this story. And that should not necessarily always be done through lecturing. But then Britt lectures, some of the residents lecture themselves. So there are multiple representations going on and I'm fine with that – it is part of the project.

*Some critics have talked about the possible conflict within this idea of 'multiple authorship' – I understand that you initiate the project and then step back or into a secondary role, allowing other authors or other voices. But then at the same time you talked about having the artistic reputation in order to get commissions on your own terms – do you see any conflict in that?*

JvH: It's an ongoing conflict. And I agree we are living in a reputation economy, so it's hard to escape from that. I try to be as fair and honest about it as possible – I always share authorship with people so they can take a bit of the pie and run with it – the problem is I cannot escape myself. With the tour the credits are very clear – an original idea by me (JvH) to do the tour, the director is Britt, the script is written by these people, these are the people who perform it etc. I'm not a theatre director, I could not make that piece of theatre, neither can I write a script. I can think of this idea – that's what I bring to the table – then of course this is within 'my' project, so there are always people that talk about what I as an artist bring to the mix. And when it's from an art perspective they like to talk about that. But I would not claim the tour as a piece of performance by me for example; neither would I claim the script as a piece of writing, or the design of the building (by URBED). It's hard to deny being the initiator of it, and that's the reputational economy. If somebody can tell me how to escape it I will be the first one to learn the trick.

*The website with the mapping of actors and authors is another attempt.*

JvH: I even try to change my name at some point! Because my passport says Henrietta Adriana Maria, and my calling name is Jeanne. And Jeanne van Heeswijk is almost like a brand now, so maybe my friends should call me Henri and Jeanne van Heeswijk is just something that works in this field. They're all artificial constructs, the only thing that you can do is keep saying that these are projects that are multiple-y authored, and if you speak to people in the press, that's why I always say I want to read every interview I give and want to make it factual and check that people are mentioned. It's quite hard. How can we escape that?

*I was also interested to hear you talk about the various mechanisms that you set up in your practice around paying everyone the same, maintaining ethical controls to make sure that nobody gets exploited. These sorts of things are quite often not talked about when discussing socially engaged practice in art or architecture.*

JvH: That's why I say you have to practice what you preach. So I try to do that the best I can, despite the fact that it's quite hard to escape it. When I won the Curry Stone Award I invested in the bakery, the year before when I got the Annenberg award I gave it to the Freehouse Cooperative to work with. These were oeuvre prizes, so not prizes you get for one project but for your way of working, but I think it's most fair to bring that to the project that I'm working on most at that moment – to be used for the project. Not to give everybody 10 euros extra, but to make the money work for the project. These are all mechanisms you can use. But then I was talking in a conference with Creative Time (who awarded the Leonore Annenberg Prize) about reputation economy – I said “thank you for awarding me that prize but you are part of the disaster for me... of reputational economy”. The only thing you can do is keep trying to be ethical about it and self-critical – “am I claiming too much for myself?”, “am I giving others enough space?”, “is the organisational structure horizontal or getting hierarchical?” But on the other hand it's about self-expectation, because some people also claim a position when they haven't done that much...

*In that sense do you just live by your ethical code or guidelines? With social practice becoming instrumentalised or subsumed into the dominant market economy, is there a way in which more general socially engaged practice can stand up to it – other than each person's own ethical code?*

JvH: In general if we could all be a bit more critical around ways of working and not just highlighting success. In taking time to learn about the process and some of the concerns, internal conflicts and some of the failures – without going necessarily one way or another. Because the other extreme is somebody complains or that there is a spectacle made of it one way or another. To me, something that we should all do is to take the time to seriously see what is at play, what is at work, and what can we learn from things that happen – and not make a spectacle about failure nor success. That's the biggest problem, and we all have to take responsibility for that. But it's the same in Anfield, some people put too much pressure on it emotionally, because the project is not there to solve their emotional problems. In all of these projects it has to be about learning how we can live together, and how we can share a little bit more horizontally or fairly. It doesn't mean you have to become a communist – just share a little bit more fairly and learning how to do that between all of our different capacities or skillsets. And for that you have to learn from each other and question each other and be critical together. And that is also what you have to do as a professional – to make that adequate ‘code of conduct’. *Although it seems like professional codes in other fields or disciplines are dealing with very different subjects to these.*

JvH: I got an email from a friend that said “when the New York Times features first and article on your work and then recently a huge feature on socially engaged practices - something is wrong!” (laughs). But then on the other hand it's good that there are more people that see a different way of working required – so it is not all negative. How do we then live with it and deal with it – that is very important. I quite often say to the people in the bakery, who are sometimes resisting the Biennial, in all these organisations there are also people that believe an alternative is possible – whether these people are in government, on the street, in the Biennial structure, in architecture schools – they are everywhere. So it's also a bit presumptuous to create this us and them. So I'm more interested to find those people with whom together we can create things – and creating binary oppositions are not fruitful and sometimes hurtful. Why should someone a bit more ‘snotty’ by birth genuinely not also want to dedicate his or her time to the bakery – do you have to be deprived, poor and a Scouser in order to be interested in a housing struggle? That's the other side of it. In our projects you have to battle it (balance) from all sides.

*But these processes are so complicated and specific to that site and that moment...*

JvH: For instance there is a group of people in Liverpool that resent the Biennial as this kind of gentrifier, but there's also a critical forces within the Biennial that constantly monitors and question this – and so they choose to work with an artist of which they know is very critical about it, and that asks them use their forces and the possibilities create something different, a small scale alternative.

The powers that be at the moment are a neo-liberal society in which we are all emerged in one way or another. I don not think a position outside of it exist, you can only be within. And if you work within the situation then you have dirty hands one way or another. But you can try to resist or refuse.

*That's an interesting point about not just working within a system but being open and self-critical about that.*

JvH: And the ties that the project has - make that an object of discussion.

*This is part of the final point I wanted to make about art becoming interlinked with social inquiry – and the (Anfield) project is very close to ethnography in a way. If you're doing social research you have so much focus on rigour, methods and outcomes ("what did it mean") so I wanted to ask whether you reflect on projects in this way in terms of the impacts.*

JvH: Not in that sense that you can tick a box. What I mostly look back at is whether it generated a more inclusive image of our time and day, I quite often say it's very flat – see me as a contemporary portrait painter or landscape painter. I paint huge portraits in time about groups of people dealing with their life. So I look back on it as whether we managed to make a more inclusive image of our society, and a more inclusive narrative of place. And then I try to analyse the image that is created. So I look more at affect than effect you could say. But I'm not thinking "did this really change?", because then you get into the question of "if two houses are saved is it successful, if one is saved it's not successful", or "If 10 people participated it's reasonable but if 60 people participated you're a hero!" Because it's not about those kinds of outcomes – but if we co-produced an image of a possible alternative together - although that's a temporary construct - it would be amazing. And quite often my works never get there – but there might be hints of where you could go and look for it. I find myself if I look at my own artistic practice, I'm not a virtuoso – I'm really struggling with the material and myself all of the time. I have to work myself through it as well, so that's also why co-producing is so important to me. Working yourself through it with somebody - that learning collectively – is something that I find very important. The best I can do is work at it and with it, and hopefully hinting or finding some leads into a possibility of it. I cannot think of the image as absolute in that sense.



## Deborah Egan, Initiator of the Port of Sheffield

*16<sup>th</sup> September 2013 - Sheffield School of Architecture, Sheffield*

[Transcription of collaborative analysis / reflection session]

*Adam Park: Although I've looked at a lot of different types of performance - theatre, guided walks, audio tours – a common characteristic is way that performance is used opportunistically - using performance as a political or social response to the gaps in the urban fabric.*

*Would you describe the original design for the Golden Frame (the forerunner to the Port of Sheffield) in that way?*

Deborah Egan: The Golden Frame was a response to a call from RIBA to re-imagine 'Forgotten Spaces' in the unused or overlooked areas in the city. In the context of my submission my interest was to re- focus the gaze of the onlooker using the convention of a placing large golden drawing frame on a barge.

The barge would slowly drift along the canal – occasionally stopping allowing the watcher to frame and consider a particular view. The concept owed something to both James Turrell and the 18<sup>th</sup> century drawing tool you see in Greenaway's 'The Draughtsman's Contract' .

The critical purpose was that to get people to literally focus, reflect and then take ownership of a landscape by investing in – via their participation –a new or unusual way of viewing it. The Golden Frame was planned as a forerunner to The Port of Sheffield Digital Trail, which would take the interaction to the next stage by collecting memories and stories from its audience. These could be memories or original creative work including writing and music. All were selected to fit with a specific element or terrain.

People would then hear the audio in situ by listening to the audio file as a sound message geo locatively delivered by mobile, or as an MP3 file as they walked through the selected landscape. It wasn't about pushing a particular pre-considered message but rather letting the landscape and people tell their own story. Then about elevating that authentic narrative and presenting it as the real view – not one that was determined by poor planning or economic failure.

Hopefully this may allow the participants to acquire confidence and adopt a louder and more determining role in the future of their environment or the way things are created or removed around them.

There are big issues in Sheffield about local environments and buildings being flattened and this has generated a sense both of loss and lack of control in its communities. Though I am neither an architect or planner , it is clear buildings inherently contain memory and identity, as Louis MacNeice said in the poem 'Relics' "Obsolete as books in leather bindings Buildings in stone like talkative ghosts continue" . When those buildings are gone it is only memory and photography which capture the infrastructure of the past and photographs neither laugh nor cry.

*AP: So those were some of the wider ambitions, and then the Golden Frame Project came about through a collaboration?*

DE: It wasn't really a collaboration. The Golden Frame was part of an RIBA competition (Forgotten Spaces 2011), which offered the opportunity to reimagine the potential or future value of forgotten spaces in the city. Because of my own interest and photographic practice in abandoned parts of the city I was already having conversations with a creative producer (Andrew Loretto at Sheffield Theatres ) around the possibilities for in-situ performance in Sheffield .

To pre-empt that and consolidate my ideas around it – I entered the RIBA competition. I also discussed the entry with Alistair (Norton) from Sheffield Society of Architects, who was also applying for the competition. Alistair was very enthusiastic and supportive about the idea of architecture creating different kinds of intervention. I had a great conversation with him. Meeting him and discussing the submission offered an affirmation of the value of the idea as I was feeling that my idea might be considered off track or off centre but Alistair gave me confidence – that mentoring steer. We didn't take the conversation further than that meeting.

*AP: It's interesting that you say that the conversation (between architecture and performance) reached a certain point and then stopped. Something I'm interested in finding is where these productive meeting points might be, because our collaboration came out of some further development of the Port of Sheffield as a live performance.*

DE: Well it actually came about because during the RIBA exhibition there were certain elements picked up by Sheffield Hallam University, who put on an architectural symposium.

I was invited alongside Keith Hayman (another shortlisted entrant) to speak at a seminar where the ideas behind the entries were discussed and I outlined the ambition for it to move to the further performative stages. We started discussing theatre as another way of exploring forgotten spaces.

*AP: And eventually we arrived at the format of the audio-walk, which was about putting something in place as a build-up to the larger-scale live performance. Could you describe the relationship between the two?*

DE: The ambition to create a full-scale live performance is still there, and interestingly Andrew (Loretto) is using some of these ideas currently in his work in Wakefield (WORDWALK) at Wakefield Lit Fest as a preliminary to the work we intend will engage in next year. Andrew has been using our venue The Blue Shed to rehearse and devise this current show working with local actors. .

When Andrew was working as creative producer at Sheffield Theatres he came from a background of producing site-specific theatre – from Chol Theatre and the National Student Drama Festival - which nobody else in the organisation had and that's how we began working together.

It was also part of Sheffield Theatres' ambition to make themselves more visible within the city and to engage more broadly with a 'citizen's theatre' approach – an idea that goes back to the 1920s and 30s.

But that is something Andrew revived and had success with in his professional practice, particularly in '20 Tiny Plays About Sheffield', which came out of some of the principles of the Port of Sheffield but in a creative writing driven environment and in a formal theatre environment on-stage.

What we were aspiring to do was get the performance out of the building and into a more publicly-visible accessible environment, because the problem with performances in theatres is – and this is generally accepted audience engagement theory – that they are locked down, and that people are intimidated or economically restricted from attending, plus there are themes that people don't necessarily recognise or find meaningful within their lives.

So there is an economic and an intellectual divide in many formal theatrical environments.

We were aspiring to take the work we are facilitating and put it back in a accessible environment. Our performance work is slated now to 2014 (to tie into the funding opportunities associated with the Tour de France stage).

The original idea was to put together a series of short performances along the canal that would bring to life some of the stories that have been collected during the Port of Sheffield audio walk collection.

We also had money from the Arts Council to employ consultants for production and engagement. As a result of that we narrowed performance areas down to three points along the canal that would be suitable for gathering larger audiences.

Our original idea was to dot tint performative elements along the canal but because of the restrictions in terms of health and safety, the water and the lack of sites for audiences of more than 5 or 6 people we decided against the smaller elements. We also decided that this might potentially make it dangerous for small children. So we fixed on three points (The Canal Basin, the mooring point behind Don Valley Stadium and the former Tinsley Wire site ( near Tinsley Locks and Marina).

*AP: It's interesting to relate those ideas to some of the other work I've looked at – where there often appears to be a conflict between taking people to really interesting sites and this unique experience and limiting it to a handful of people – and doing something transformative for a whole community or region. And high-brow vs low-brow playing out as part of that.*

DE: Yes If you look at the National Theatre of Wales' Passion (at Port Talbot) – they had around 200 people when played the first Act, but by the time they came to the final act there were 20,000 people in the audience . So looking at the experience of other performances of this nature we thought it was better – for lots of reasons -to have an opportunity for it to be as visible as possible.

*AP: The audio-walk or digital trail trail is slightly different in terms of the way it operates (individual, open-ended, etc.) in my research I am suggesting that the trail works as an open-ended map of the Don Valley that mixing history and personal stories. Do you recognise it as working in that way?*

DE: The most exciting part of it – and my opinion is tinged with political bias – is that it is a map of the area but one that is not driven by economics or capital. There are parallels with the way that you might define history – its not the history of kings and queens but rather that of the people who occupy the landscape.

So what makes it exciting is that – in a different kind of way - it is reclaiming that map. Its far more interesting for me to have a map based on the stories of the people that have spent their lives engaging with a place than a plan of Forgemasters and also its not what people expect. We are mired in expectation!

This product forms a new means of interactive education built from people's voices and reflections of a place – yet allowing the listener to upload their own contribution .

We found that if put in too much 'objective' historical content that's not personal leaves people cold –they don't like it or find it particularly interesting- they'd rather hear a story about somebody or a piece of music or even a piece of poetry – that's more to do with a sentient relationship with that landscape.

*AP: Absolutely – even in the small design decisions when we were making it there was lots of things about how to describe and represent the walk. And it has all these crossovers with the type of official historical history trails or tourist maps of an area – and I think we were very much trying to something else.*

*I'm also interested in projects that are built around participation – encouraging people to participate in performance as contributors, collaborators, as active participants or listeners. In both this and the larger site-specific performance what do you see as the biggest challenges in bringing communities in as participants?*

DE: We have to foster ownership and engagement this should inherent in all work of this kind - rather than conforming to the community engagement models of just zooming in, doing something and running off again. There should be sustainability and a prolonged opportunity to contribute.

I have a personal conflict about it - because I'm aware that what we have done and continue to do (the audio trail) is the best we can in the sense of participation – but it's not perfect.

Ideally, participation and interactive contribution should be a thread that runs through a lot of projects and programmes – and not least in education of young children. There are lots of examples of bad practice in community engagement – which I wouldn't want us to be guilty of.

In terms of engaging people to participate in the in situ performance – the model we are using is initially writers' workshops (used in the Wakefield project) – working with a group of local actors and writers – the actors drawn through an auditioning process, and aimed to include the full range of ages and acting experience.

We also have the text from the collecting experience - recordings from the Port of Sheffield audio trail to add to this new creative writing.

We will also approach recognised Sheffield-based artists and grassroots community organisations – brass bands, local dance groups who will devise or improvise thematic sections. We will also work with a writer editor who will bring this all together, very much in the method of amalgamation of 'Twenty Tiny Plays about Sheffield'.

*AP: So tapping into existing networks.*

The issue is asking at what level do people want to contribute. Nobody wants to get into the type of situation that I took part in 3 weeks ago – at a Punchdrunk show at Waterloo. It can feel a quite compromising and very uncomfortable position to be in, particularly for people who might be non-'theatre literate'. Participation can be inappropriate and potentially bullying.

That's not what we want, but we would like to have a range of levels at which people can enter the process in order to find a place where they are comfortable – it might just be leaving your story and knowing that that's been contributed.

*AP: It was interesting how reticent people were during collection for the audio trail – when they thought it was a very formal thing and they were going to be judged on the quality of the story etc. But when you spent more time with them and they realised that we were not looking for some 'official record' they were more than happy to tell you stories about their mum's house etc.*

DE: People did warm to the subject – there were some amazing stories.

*AP: So we had 20 detailed responses and I wanted to share those and compare my analysis with what you felt about the response. My initial analysis groups this into 3 categories for closed questions: **Memorable stories** (Pete Jordan, Deborah Pullen, Full Monty, Jessica Ennis, **technical issues** (app, environment, other design), and **improvements** to the canal (towpath, bins, signage, regeneration).*

*The Pete Jordan story emerged as a commonly cited as most memorable – perhaps due to the element of surprise.*

DE: If we were to get into an analysis of successful storytelling - the amazing thing about the Pete Jordan story is that it is part of a tradition of storytelling that has a clear entrance, central event, denouement and postscript – which obeys classic formal lines that you might find in the retelling of a Greek myth. The issue is that somebody like Pete will have told that story to his mates in the community pub many times, so it has become polished and honed in its retelling.

Pete Jordan is the equivalent of an elegiac bard – telling a human story which is very funny, naïve, very revealing with many subplots off from the central story (the drunk man is a Polish immigrant).



Pete Jordan is Harold Pinter – ( but he’s a water bailiff who works on the canal and nobody have ever told him that he’s Harold Pinter!) And the reason that it’s so successful is that he’s part of a long tradition of male-to-male storytelling. He knows that story and its structure but it hasn’t been intellectualised – it’s perfect.

*AP: The Deborah Pullen story also stood out for me and other respondents – perhaps because of childhood and nostalgia, and some of the traditions of the factory workers without doing a typical history.*

DE: It’s also refreshing because it’s a female voice. And one of the other reasons people find it attractive is because as a girl coming from that background – she is behaving in a way that a boy would behave, and she doesn’t see any kind of division.

We hear her telling here of hurling herself in to the canal and swimming in the filthy water and of course its even more interesting because it’s not a very girlish thing to do. Within her storytelling she also adopts the characters of the people – the massive scream when she mimicks her mother finding large frogs in the bath for example!

*AP: I also looked at the more open-ended responses- and tried to create theme some of the issues that lie behind the trail. The first of these was ‘History & future’, which looked at the way that the trail was perceived as a straightforward learning tool, but responses also highlighted more than that - the complex nature of the space; dereliction alongside traces of the past as still alive, and the ‘new’ identity of the canal as a green oasis. This perhaps taps into some of the things that you were saying before...*

DE: There’s an ugly phrase that’s suddenly been generated – and was thrown back at me in a recent exchange with a large cultural institution – which is about Sheffield’s ‘Industrial Romanticism’.

I find that term makes my stomach curdle because it’s a commodification of those valuable experiences and the emotional importance of what we have collected. The need to tag and measure is a very British academic trait and in describing them that locks them down.

Some things should just be left for people to have free creative association with –to be allowed to physically engage with as in walking through a landscape and just looking and reflecting. The experiences don’t need compartmentalising that only restricts what’s allowed in and out of that space by its over definition for example if as a painter you could be Glaswegian but weren’t a colourist you couldn’t be part of the Glasgow School , literary and Art history are littered with examples.

What has been refreshing during our conversations with contributors , collecting and recording, has been finding is a positive embracing of change – not seeing industrial dereliction as a terrible thing but imbuing it with a sense of positivity around it as a phase of adjustment and the final stage the reclaiming back of the terrain from industry by nature.

*AP: And it was my reading that the format of the trail was open enough to allow space for mixed readings – the sadness of dereliction alongside the positivity of it as a green oasis (dialectical change)*

*The second theme centred around what I’m calling a ‘Remapping effect’ - the canal as an (unexpected) new experience – this discovery challenged preconceptions of the area and participant’s existing personal geography of Sheffield – if this other place or possibility exists that they didn’t know about (despite living here for many years) may be other places and possibilities also exist?*

DE: This is also very much the Blue Loop’s agenda they focus on the ‘ and from the strong shall come forth the sweet’ from an environmental perspective . The process encourages us all to explore the hidden corners there is an inexhaustible supply of unexpected pleasure!”

*AP: Finally, the **spatial experience** – the walk as creating an ‘embodied space’ where participants felt that they ‘met’ other people (even though these were prerecorded). The experience had the effect of slowing people down and ‘opening their eyes’ to their surroundings. There were mixed reports about the way that the audio shut out surrounding people and sound – some enjoyed the way that it actually sparked conversations.*

The writer Richard Hulford’s remarks stood out - he commented after participating on the trail that it was like ‘being joined by a friend who accompanies you for a while and then drifts off before somebody else joins you again’ – that was a beautiful comment .

*AP: So that was the way that I analysed it - but I wondered if there were things that you thought I’d missed?*

DE: No. And that’s all very positive but I think that there are other things that aren’t so positive. One of them is the lack of time to invest in it to really make it ‘rock out’ or become more of what it could be. That’s a nagging issue with me – and I’m struggling with myself to find ways to make that change. There’s also a lack of recognition of it – which I find irritating.

There isn’t anything else like it in the city – but I feel people should get on board with it a bit more – it is free!

*AP: I can understand that – there are also some things about the production values and technological issues that we were aware of – but a lot of this comes down to it being free. Nobody was really paid for any time, and with voluntary effort it is difficult.*

*As a final issue - during my research there has been a certain level of resistance to mixing art / performance as social - the idea that art can be used as tool or ‘instrumentalised’ for social benefit.*

DE: From what I’ve already said we’ve covered it really. If knowledge continues to be held and not shared, and is only accessible by doing a PhD or an MA then nothing will ever change. We’ve got to find other ways of engaging with people... new ways of engaging with other voices and re-describing the landscape and our shared condition.

## Simon Ogden, Regeneration Manager, Sheffield City Council

16<sup>th</sup> September 2013 - Sheffield City Council Offices, Sheffield

*Adam Park: How would you describe Sheffield – to someone who doesn't know Sheffield – both physically and socially?*

Simon Ogden: I suppose you have to start with the topography – in some ways it's an unlikely place to build a large city, and you have to understand it's history to understand why a city this size grew up in this particular quite steep gradient and disturbed topography. And that's one of its great distinguishing features and charms is that it is built on challenging gradients and therefore you get long views, glimpses of the countryside beyond the city, you get very distinctive townscape just by the fact that the neighbourhoods are crammed into valleys and hilltops. And you get lots of rivers; very dynamic rivers. But the last 300 years have been very much about mankind manipulating that environment for single-minded industrial purposes. It's a heavily modified landscape, which if you stand back from it - certainly the most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century - produced unbelievably ugly, despoiled, brutalised townscape, so it has comparatively little of the kind of architectural quality, quaintness or elegance that many other cities have. It is a city almost totally devoted to production and very little to decoration. It's also a highly spatially polarised city, partly because of the topography and partly because of the prevalence of air and water pollution in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The wealthiest parts of the population have continually resorted to the southwest, leaving the other northern and eastern parts of the city to the poorer parts of the community. More than any other British city I can think of it has retained that polarisation. So you do get some superb urban quality in the southwest of the city – some of the best suburbs, fantastic access to the countryside – and that's something to be celebrated for the whole city but it's concentrated for the benefit of those people who are fortunate enough to afford to live in that part of the city. And so you can get very contrasting views of the city depending on where your entry point is and where you live and where you work.

*AP: That point about the pollution and the prevailing winds is something that I have read again and again, and I'm never quite certain how significant that was compared to the proximity to the countryside.*

SO: Well there were the beginnings of upper middle class suburbs in places like Pitsmoor Road – you can see that for several decades in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century there was an attempt to establish a similar kind of 'bourgeois suburb'. Similarly Norfolk Park as well – at once time the wealthiest citizens lived on Norfolk Road, and after a few decades they abandoned it and move further upwind. I suppose the west side of the city was always going to be more picturesque as well, and the east side had coal mining as well as air pollution, so all of the those things contributed together I'm sure – it wasn't just the prevailing winds. But you can see various attempts that failed to develop other parts of the city for upmarket housing.

*AP: That leads into the area which I'm focussing on, the Lower Don, where there has been this process of industrialisation followed by not complete but fairly widespread de-industrialisation. I understand that you were involved in the urban renewal of the Lower Don in the 1980s and 90s – That's right from 1985-6 So how would describe the changing nature of the Lower Don in that period?*

SO: I first encountered the Lower Don Valley in the early 1970s, so I was living in the city when it was still 'one big workshop' as they used to say, and when there was still a fair amount of housing in the East End as well. The first ten years I was in the city I saw it being depopulated and the Council were still pursuing the long-standing policy of basically clearing terraced housing to allow the steelworks to expand. And that had been the orthodox view for the previous 40 years – the works were going to expand, they created an environment that wasn't suitable for people to live in, therefore get the families out onto the hilltops and let the steelworks expand. That was rumbling on right until the early 1980s, and that process was pretty much completed and so the whole valley was depopulated, with the exception of Darnall and Tinsley, leaving these marooned centres

like Attercliffe - still at that point with Banner's Department Store, a couple of cinemas and loads of pubs and shops - carrying on regardless but surrounded by wasteland of clearance. And it slowly dawned from the early 1980s onwards that steel industry wasn't going to expand, in fact it was contracting, adding to the dereliction. You had a whole series of big works closures from the early 1980s and the steel strikes onwards, and so places like Dunford Hadfields and Brown Bayley's closed, and you were starting to get a moonscape emerging, not dissimilar from what you see in Detroit. So there was a total crisis of that orthodoxy that had seen slum clearances as what Councils did - previous generations of Local Government Officers spent their whole careers just knocking down terraced houses - and people started to question that: "Why are we just carrying on demolishing housing in areas where actually deindustrialisation is happening now?", and "what do we do with all of this land that we've cleared if the steelworks aren't expanding?". In the early 1980s there was a rethinking of that whole approach; a man called Geoff Green (now Professor at Sheffield Hallam University) was quite influential in that rethinking, and he and others came up with an 'Economic and Environmental Strategy for the Lower Don Valley', which said that if we want to see this area continue to be a useful part of the city, we've first got to restore the environment because it is completely destroyed - the rivers and canal were polluted, the land was contaminated, there was hardly a tree anywhere - "who is ever going to want to do anything in this valley in this moonscape?". And that was where myself and colleagues came in, and the first iteration of that was to set up a small agency down in Attercliffe to start doing greening works - fairly rudimentary stuff - the corridors of road, rail, and canal - to try to create some green corridors and to look at what are the uses that these great swathes of cleared land can be put to. Sheffield was one of the first cities in the country that came round to the view that sport was one of the key activities that we should try to draw in. We were already working on a park in Attercliffe when someone from another part of the Council came up with this idea of the world student games, so the two things were melded together and the idea of a concentration of sports facilities came out of that. Then the idea for the Meadowhall Centre came along, and I won't go into the long history of that now but that was another big chunk of activity that at the time seemed completely outlandish - the idea that people would go shopping on the site of Dunford Hadfields in Tinsley! And then there were more conventional attempts to attract growth industries at the time, particularly 'high-tech' industries into the valley, and the one thing that there wasn't much interest in was manufacturing - because that was seen to be on the way out. So it was a case of what else could be brought in other than manufacturing. On top of that, largely in the first place through local communities, people started saying "if the environment's going to be better, if we're going to start looking at shopping and sports in this area, why can't we come back and live here?". And that was very much led by people from Darnall saying "Attercliffe is our homeland - it's where our families came from - we'd like to go back to Attercliffe". So we got involved with them trying to find sites at that stage that were suitable to receive new-build housing, which turned out to be remarkably difficult. AP: *There's no a huge amount of housing from that era.* SO: No - basically just the Valley Gardens development around Shirland Lane and Chippingham Street. When it came down to it, although there had been huge deindustrialisation, there was still quite a lot of noisy, smelly, 'bad neighbour' uses dotted about that still made it very hard to find suitable housing sites, and it took so long in fact that a lot of the original activists that were involved in the campaign gave up, moved away or died. And it's still reverberating on - there are still some big sites that have been identified for housing but haven't happened yet because the residual industrial activity is still quite dominant. In some cases we've had to buy out active industrial uses and move them in order to make housing sites like the ones on the canal.

AP: *I understand that there's a renewed interest in that Waterside scheme.* If you go way back, when we did the original restoration of the canal (1986-94) there was an expectation that housing would come back along the canalside quite quickly. But again, that was based on a slightly naïve assumption that all this industry was going to melt away, where in fact there was a hard corridor of scrapyards, some steelworks, and other noxious uses that clung to the canal for years after it was expected to go - just because they'd always been there, it was out of the way and it wasn't bothering anybody. So actually, a lot of the assumptions that the restoration of the canal were based on never really happened - except around Victoria Quays with some fairly big chunks of public money put into it. And it's only in the last five years, when some of those uses have either closed or

been bought out, that we've actually got a major development site between Woodbourn Road and the canal and on the other side (Effingham Road) which is suitable for development – and that's a partnership between the Council, British Waterways and Norfolk Estate. So it's taken a long longer than for the deindustrialisation to happen ironically. Then the other thing is that one side of the canal from Attercliffe downstream is occupied by a railway line, and now the Supertram as well, so that has been sterilised, and (so far) the development opportunities have been a lot more limited than what had been imagined back in the 80s.

19:30

*AP: Did the Five Weirs Walk (5WW) come about at the same sort of time – was it part of the same efforts?*

SO: The 5WW was part of the same philosophy, but resources, then as now, were limited, and the Council's view was that they were going to put most of their efforts into the Attercliffe Road corridor and the canal. The river was seen as being too difficult because of the multiple ownerships. My bosses at the time said "it's just too hard – put it in the 'too hard' box!". Others in the office felt that was never going to happen if we didn't seize the opportunity now then the banks of the river would get rebuilt without access and we'd go for another century before opportunity came around again. A small group of us, which included Mike Wild (who had recently established the Wildlife Trust) who had taken a sabbatical from Sheffield Hallam University (or the Polytechnic as it then was) to work in our office. Conversations went on with Mike and the Junior Chamber of Commerce, who were keenly involved in the river at that time. We drew those three elements together; the Council, the Wildlife Trust and Junior Chamber of Commerce, and set up the 'Five Weirs Trust' as a third sector way of approaching the ambition – and that's how it continued as that three-way partnership and proved quite effective, although it took us a lot longer than anyone thought it was going to take. It was probably the best tool for the job, because what it involved was persuading large numbers of small business people to give up their riverbank for free, and if the Council had arrived on their doorstep asking that question then the businesses would have said "get your chequebook out!". Because it was a charitable organisation we were able to persuade virtually every landowner to give the land up free. We only had to buy two pieces of land in the whole 7.5km – so it was an effective way of doing it and it was another way of raising funds because the Trust could approach local charities and small amounts of money for feasibility work, and could promote an agenda and in some cases comment on planning applications in a critical way which the Council would have been unable to do. It was an effective way of winning some battles – we had to twist some people's arms – Meadowhall in particular. Although they (Meadowhall) put the first section of pathway in, they didn't want to connect it up to the outside world – they literally didn't want people for Tinsley and Brightside to be able to get into their grounds that easily. So there was a big campaign with Tinsley Forum to get them to agree to put the bridge over the canal and the railway into Tinsley, and to open up the section through to Wheedon Street.

That was the first phase 1986-89. Then the Development Corporation was set up and in common with the rest of England, Michael Heseltine's view was that Local Authorities were not going to do regeneration of this sort of scale – they would have to impose these Corporations with their own planning powers and boards - not democratically accountable but able to take tough commercial decisions. From 1989-97 we had the Development Corporation. Sheffield City Council managed to get on reasonably well with our Development Corporation, partly because nearly all of the staff were ex-colleagues, partly because they pretty much took the 'Geoff Green' Strategy over – they didn't come up with anything too outlandish. Even Meadowhall wasn't their idea - that was already approved by the time that they took over. They were some decisions that we didn't agree with; Centertainment for instance was one that the City Council wouldn't have approved. But by and large there was a shared agenda – they agreed with the idea that environment had to be restored, they agreed with the uses that were being brought in. They were probably a bit more liberal with their planning permissions and a bit less hard on developers, but there wasn't a fundamental difference. In some places like Leeds and Bristol there was no communication at all and they ended up blocking each other, but in Sheffield

we got on with the job and they employed us as their agents to do a lot of the environmental work. So that was the period of the biggest activity, when a lot of site reclamation was done, all of the World Student Games facilities were built, Meadowhall was opened, the Don Valley link road was put in. After 1996, the money ran out and the focus of the Council had moved to the City Centre for very good reasons so there was then a ten year relatively low-key period during which not a lot of initiative was taken.

*AP: And then there was a 2005 masterplan.* SO: The 2005 masterplan was funded and very largely directed by British Land, who wanted to start looking at redeveloping their Meadowhall Estate. At the time, the City Council didn't have the resources to do a new masterplan for the Don valley so they (British Land) said "we'll pay for one". As you might expect, we got something that was pretty much focussed on Meadowhall and the interests of British Land! It did have proposals for other areas but these were fairly preposterous to be honest – massive housing estates all over the central valley where all of the scrapyards etc. are – it was never going to happen. But after that came the idea for new offices and housing around Meadowhall, that was the bit that had some legs. That resulted in a couple of big planning application from British Land, which the City supported for a number of good planning reasons but also because it meant that they weren't trying to expand Meadowhall for shopping. Other than that it was not really a very meaningful masterplan to be honest.

28:00

*AP: Having met Steve Birch recently, I am aware of the new Action Plan that tries to focus on Attercliffe.*

SO: There are two things; a new masterplan for the whole Sheffield – Rotherham Don Valley corridor – *AP: the infrastructure masterplan* – SO: Yes, which is trying to put a meaningful masterplan that will have a coherent vision for the whole of the valley, because the Local Authority boundary (between Sheffield and Rotherham) means nothing on the ground -and then there's the Action Plan for Attercliffe.

*AP: There are various aspects that could have quite a dramatic impact, the Waterside development being one that we have already discussed, and then the future of Castlegate (in terms of the canal), and Don Valley Stadium demolition, which seems to sit outside of the aims of Action Plan.*

SO: Well, it (the Don Valley Stadium decision) wasn't anticipated at the time that the Action Plan was written (almost 3 years ago) so it's a product of the extreme crisis of local government finance. Having said that, of all of the big sporting venues that were produced for the World Student Games, it was always the one that had least use, because it was so specifically built for athletics, where the Arena, Ponds Forge etc. have multiple uses. It's not quite a one trick pony because it has quite successfully staged rock concerts but don't come along frequently enough, it's also served as a rugby stadium and a football stadium, but not a terribly satisfactory one. What it also showed up, which is easy to say in retrospect, was an assumption that if you put something like a stadium into the Lower Don Valley or Attercliffe it would generate spin-off effects that would regenerate the surrounding area. That hasn't proved to be the case, because over the same period those kind of venues have moved from being somewhere that just sold you a ticket to go in, to places where they made their money from selling you drinks, food etc. So they have internalised all that activity that used to happen around more traditional sports stadia. And this isn't something unique to Sheffield this has happened all over the country. The old match-day or event-day activity - that you'd get when the pubs were crammed with people and people would go out afterwards to the cafes and so on – and there would be crescendo of economic activity around a sports stadium. First thing is most people arrive by car, so they go into the car park and go straight from their cars into the venue, have all of their requirements served for the profitability of the venue and then get in their cars and go home again. So it could be on the moon for all of the benefit it gives to Attercliffe or Darnall. All they get is the traffic congestion. That model hasn't worked in terms of regenerating Attercliffe.

*AP: The other that strikes me is that the Tram being at the back discourages any departure out into Attercliffe.*

SO: Yes unfortunately there were purely, if you like, 'accidental' things – like that the railway line is the tram

line so that it doesn't take people through any of the more built up parts of the valley. From that sense there hasn't been a terribly strong protest from local business about the potential loss of the stadium, they see it as being largely neutral in terms of the local economy, and perhaps a few hundred houses would be a more reliable source of regeneration. AP: *Is that the preferred reuse?* SO: It's still open – as you will be aware, Ricahrd Caborn (ex-minister for sport) is pushing hard for this Advanced Sport Park idea based on his experience of the Advanced Manufacturing Park, and if that could be pulled off that could be very good. But the fall-back if that doesn't prove viable is housing and there is quite a strong argument for housing, particularly given that it would allow quite a strong concentrate of housing along the tram route, which is something we've not been terribly successful in bringing about so far. Everybody knows that tram lines are most effective when they go through areas of dense population and if we want to try to direct housing to sustain areas where travel can be easily accomplished by public transport - then that's a good site to encourage. It's also on the route of the proposed Combined Heat and Power, so you could have low energy costs – so there are some quite strong environmental reasons for seeing that as another housing site along with Attercliffe Waterside, and therefore create a critical mass that would make Attercliffe into a real urban community again. Either outcome is quite positive.

AP: *Is that the vision for the vision for the relationship between the city and the canal in 10-15 years' time – to be transformed into somewhere that is used by a residential community?*

SO: Yes I think so. Sheffield's urban structure at its most successful has used waterways as green corridors. If you look at the more favoured suburbs in the south west from Sheaf Valley round the Rivelin and Loxley, one of the great or unique selling points of all those areas is the proximity to one of the river valleys and the accessibility that gives out into the countryside but also increasingly as a route into town. Those of us that have worked on the canal and the 5WW always had, as a vision, trying to give the east side and north side of the city access to some similar green corridors based on the river, the canal and some of the smaller tributaries – the Tongue Gutter and so on. There can be both recreational and ecological benefits and also transport benefits. That underlines the vision for the canal that in its own way could become like the Endcliffe Park of Darnall and Tinsley.

AP: *Turning to your experience of regeneration and public engagement, particularly focused on these areas of the Lower Don but more generally as well. What methods of public engagement with the regeneration process have been most successful?*

SO: There's a whole toolbox of different methods that you can use for different situations. When we were talking about bringing housing back into the Valley for instance, we used classic 'planning-for-real' techniques, where we build models with schoolchildren and we took those models around mosques, pubs, working men's clubs, school dining rooms and so on, and got people to engage fairly directly with the large scale map, looking at where they thought things should happen. That was certainly very good at generating numbers of people to get involved and feeling that they got some sort of ownership. It was fairly crude, because you're range of options is writing something on a ticket and pinning to some particular physical part of the map – which may not cover everyone's aspirations.

AP: *It's amazing how much that still persists in all forms of participation- that's far as we've got.* SO: That's right. Whereas people may want to frame their aspirations in rather wider terms than just whether something should go there or there. Also, people suspect a bit that it's all very well you asking me, where should a park go in this area, but knowing very well that 60-70% of the sites are not available. Should we not be saying "actually the choice is limited because we don't have any money and a lot of this land is owned by people that don't want to cooperate with us – these are the actual choices, which of these is the best or the least worst?". Longer term dialogue produces more honest conclusions, but the problem is that not many members of the public have the time or energy to pursue things through several sessions of quite lengthy explanations of what the constraints are. I still think planning-for-real have a place but they are more about trying to get mass

awareness of the process, and out of that you try to get people from the community that are prepared to give it more time and consideration, and ideally, people who are representative of a community who they can then report back to and disseminate. And you probably need to work with these representatives over months or years, and that's what we are trying to do in Attercliffe now – we've put together something called a 'Town Team', and we're trying to get people to stick with it for a couple of years and put quite a bit into it themselves in terms of their own resources; contacts, business, charitable resources.

*AP: Is there a danger – in this case or in general – that people who are prepared to engage longer term have vested interests (business owners wanting more parking for example)?* SO: Yes there is a danger of that definitely, and you've got to weight things accordingly – that's partly why you have elected members who are there to represent the ones who don't shout very loudly. But nearly all of the forms of public participation that planning and regeneration use favour more articulate people with resources and confidence. So that's why I wouldn't dismiss things like planning-for-real, that try to break down some of those barriers and make it more accessible. At the end of the day, those with education and resources are going to find the process easier to work.

*AP: At the last Attercliffe event, there was a feeling from some people there of why should they get involved when the Council are being quite realistic and saying "we don't have any money so nothing may happen in the next few years". So there is a bit of that feeling of fatigue and disbelief that anything will happen.*

SO: That's a not entirely unrealistic view given what they hear on the news every night about the continual cutting back of resources and capacity in local government. At the same time, for the Lower Don Valley there are some massive investments planned; Combined Heat and Power, tram train (to Rotherham), flood protection, Don Valley Stadium and Waterside sites. If you start to add it up you come to a budget that's not that different from what the Development Corporation spent on the area. This doesn't necessarily apply to every part of the city – but for that particular part of the city at the moment, they're on the verge of quite a massive investment spree, and so there is something to fight for – which is why we've suggested doing the Action Plan. We're not suggesting we do an Action Plan for Shiregreen or Millhouses – its specifically because there is so much investment and potential in the area.

47:00

*[AP describes research interests of artist and performance-led interventions in regeneration areas sparking a different view of the possibilities for a place]*

*AP: As a planning department how much engagement or knowledge is there about artist-led forms of participation – commissioning artists or performance-makers as part of planning policy?*

SO: We commission quite a lot of artists. We have a longstanding commitment to public art and we collect money from developers, we make them commit to conditions on the planning application (Section 106) and when we do our own physical projects we have a public art budget and we have a public art officer (Andy Skelton). So yes, we have a strong commitment to public art – a lot of that tends to fairly straightforward pieces of furniture; decorative railings, mosaics and the usual things. It tends to be fixed things – partly because developers want to see something for their money – they want to see something where they can say "we did that". A piece of performance art evaporates into the air, and other than a few photographs they haven't got anything to show for it, so more performance or theatre based stuff is relatively rare. We've commissioned a lot of poetry you'll have noticed – that's probably the closest we get to a policy – and think that's something that's been quite distinctive for Sheffield. Every year for Off the Shelf festival we commission a big piece of public poetry, some of which is quite good or certainly very memorable, and has brought poetry to fairly unexpected places like the Five Weirs Walk and the bottom of London Road. We've done relatively little that is purely performance, I can't say for certain but in my experience I can't think of any Section 106



fund that's gone purely on something that was a performance. But I think we have used public art quite consciously as part of place-making, going back to early 80s with the big steelworker mural in Castlegate, a lot of the stuff in the City Centre; the Peace Gardens and the Cutting Edge (at the Train Station); big set pieces of public art that have been successful in changing how people think about Sheffield. We've got one on the go at the moment at Tinsley the M1 Gateway commission – not the Steel Man (by Steve Mehdi) but something around the waterside in Tinsley that replaces, psychologically at least, the cooling towers. I suppose as planners we tend towards something that has a physical representation in the end.

Not so much as a planner but as a community activist I've worked with quite a lot of musicians and had quite a lot of events on the river – singing in the river, poetry on the river, barges going down the canal with music on. Tramlines I think you could is an example of where creating physical spaces has then stimulated people to then look at performance – and we're very keen on trying to push that a bit further in Castlegate in the next two or three years – to use some of the vacant spaces and buildings in that area and the Castle Market site for events, performances, temporary artworks and so hopefully that area will become a little bit of a laboratory for using some of those techniques a bit more. Partly because you've got some great stories associated with that area that are not really that widely understood or valued by the city at the moment – that you can only really bring out by performing. Even if we find a complete ground plan of the Sheffield Castle it won't really come alive for most people, so the arts are going to be the main way to bring that back to life.

*AP: I know that the audio tour for the 5WW is something that you have personally been involved with alongside the music and poetry – is there any distinction between that sort of activity and the planning side of things?*

SO: Talking as a person, I've always wanted to understand cities, particularly from a historical point of view wanting to know why things were like they were, and that's probably why I became a town planner – I wanted to understand that and have some effect on it. Over the years you realise that a lot of people who aren't town planners are also interested in that as well, but don't have the means to put it into effect. As soon as you pop up and say "let's go and walk around this area" and "did you know why this is a result of this" people absolutely love it, and there is a basic psychological need – not in everybody – but in a substantial part of the population to understand their environment better. And once they understand it better than they have more confidence in expressing an opinion about how it should be in the future, because once you understand that lots of things happen by accident or by unintended consequence or in some cases despite what the plans originally said, then you start to realise that planning and architecture are not this fantastically technical unfathomable force that 'ordinary' people can't influence. From that sense I do link the two very strongly together – if you understand the history of a place you pretty soon start to realise that you've got as much chance of affecting the future as past generations did their future – and it's a great way in to engaging people. I've always found at public meetings that if you can demonstrate you know a bit about the history of an area people will take a lot more notice of you and take you a lot more seriously. If you're unaware of the history of an area people are very suspicious – quite rightly in my view! A lot of planning and architecture is a-historical, put up with very scant respect or knowledge of where a place has come from, or respect for the particularity of place. So I do see that kind of interpretation as being essential to planning.

*AP: And stories are a great medium to engage anybody, because if you start telling stories suddenly you're not a planner or an architect any more you are person. And other people can tell stories, where if you ask "what do you want to do with this brownfield site?" Yes- they immediately feel at a disadvantage.*

*As a closing question about this (audio) tour, is there something particular about the way that this (form of engagement) links to changing perceptions of the area?*

SO: Specifically in relation to the Don valley – because it developed into this landscape of huge buildings, big roads, areas of bleak brownfield sites, it was an area that didn't feel comfortable to be on foot. One of the

reasons for trying to develop things like the towpath, the 5WW and the other foot and cycle routes through the area is to try to allow the public ways of navigating through the area – like they were meant to be there, that it was ‘legitimate’ for them to be there. And that to me is a first step in people owning an area is if they are actually comfortable about walking through it. So it is particularly relevant to area like deindustrialised or areas that have lost their function to re-establish a right of passage through them and to make that something that is interesting and pleasurable. The audio tour is another step or tool in that process, and one that is quite flexible; a lot more flexible than a book that you have to get from a library or event that you have to go on that day. *AP: Personally I think it allows you to test ideas without having to make a physical investment – low risk but potentially high impact.* *SO: Yes.*

## RECITE - The Port of Sheffield

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The Port of Sheffield Digital Trail is an audio walk along the Sheffield & Tinsley Canal.

In partnership with the Port of Sheffield, researchers from the University of Sheffield School of Architecture are studying the way in which 'forgotten' spaces in the city might be mapped through 'site specific' arts projects such as the Digital Trail.

The purpose of this research is to better understand the impacts of participating in this type of performance; we aim to find out whether this artistic engagement might help to express different types of knowledge (particularly stories) about a place.

For the first phase we are collecting initial impressions, memories, and feelings about the event from participants. We would be very grateful if you could complete this short survey about the event- it shouldn't take more than 5 minutes.

1. Your details

Postcode (first part only eg. S1) :

Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐

Age: Under 18 ☐ 18-30 ☐ 30-45 ☐ 45-60 ☐ over 60 ☐

2. How well would you say that you know the Sheffield Canal and its surrounding areas?

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Not very well (visited once or twice)
- ☐ Quite well (visited several times)
- ☐ Very well (live / have lived in the area or visit regularly)

3. Approximately how long did you spend walking the trail?

- ☐ Less than 30 minutes.
- ☐ 30 minutes - 1 hour
- ☐ 1 - 2 hours
- ☐ More than 2 hours

4. Did you enjoy the experience of walking the trail?

Not at all ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very much

5. How would you rate the audio content?

Not at all interesting ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very interesting

6. What was the most memorable moment of the Port of Sheffield digital trail?

7. Please indicate any difficulties or discomfort during the experience:

☐ Smartphone App

☐ MP3 Player

☐ Navigation

☐ Headphones

☐ Tiredness / fatigue

☐ Other:

Can you describe these difficulties or discomfort?

8. Did the experience of the trail change the way that you viewed the canal and its surrounding area?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not Sure

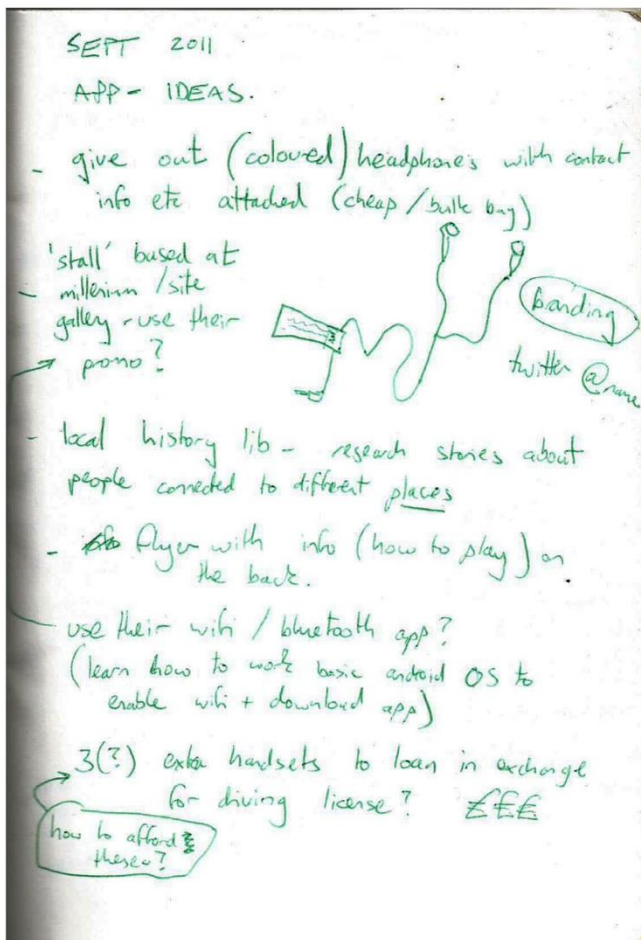
If yes, can you describe these changes.

9. The Council have put forward plans to regenerate the area around the canal (the Lower Don Valley masterplan). Having walked the towpath, what changes (if you think would most improve the canal and surrounding area? as part of

10. Is there anything that you would you like to see added to the trail itself?

Thank you for participating in this research.

This study has been approved by the University of Sheffield School of Architecture Ethics Committee in line with the University policy and the Ethical Guidelines. All information received is anonymous, confidential, and will be used for research purposes ONLY. Volunteers have the right to withdraw their consent at any time during the study. If you wish to withdraw your data or have any further questions or comments please contact the researcher Adam Park (adam.park@sheffield.ac.uk) or research supervisor Dr Chengzhi Peng (c.peng@sheffield.ac.uk).



Sample of notes and sketches made during the initial conception for the third case study (prior to the collaboration with the Blue Shed) - (September 2011).

Wetland area in Blackthorn meadows on hold due to new road plans ~~over~~ to relieve Tinsley roundabout.

Canal used to be bright orange.

big pike up by Tinsley.

Huntsman stainless steel inventor - ATR class.

6ft 10 'guaranteed' deep. clay bottomed.

Tinsley marshalling yard. 1960s. (large piece of land by Corbuck farm)

Lady won the kayak race from Swinton - Vic Quays in the 60s

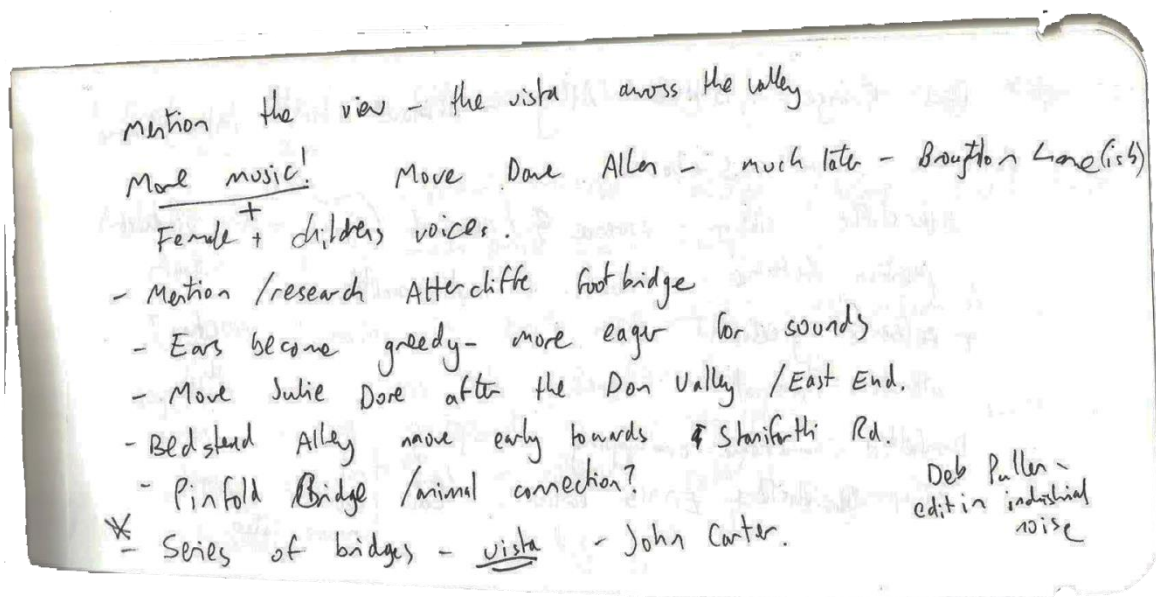
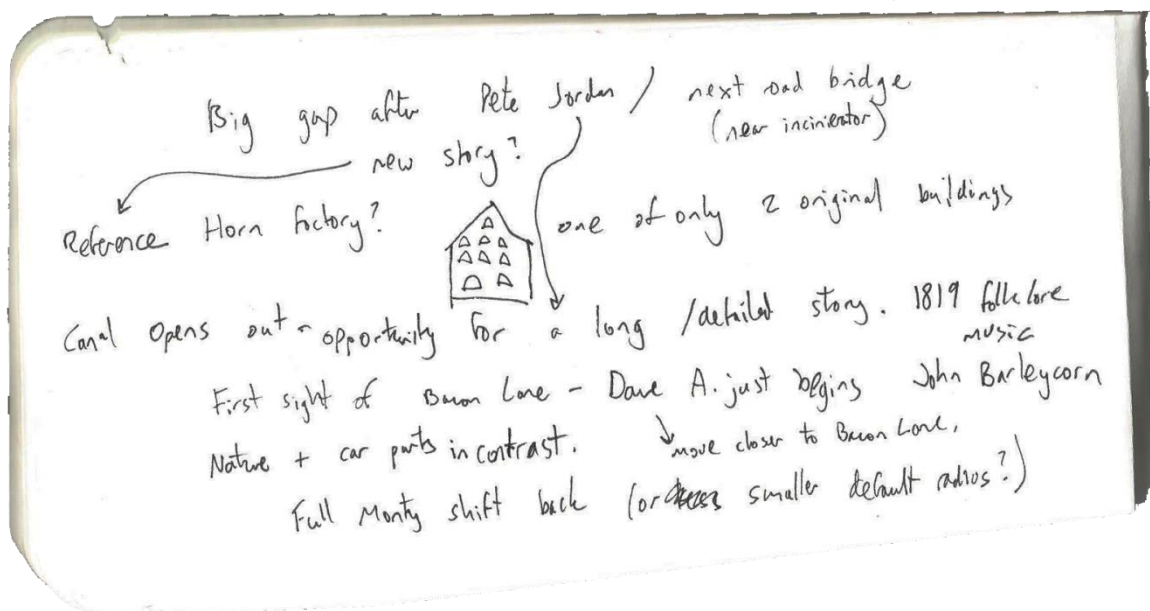
Tinsley wire used to take water from the canal. large ~~the~~ works

Sheffield electric company dropped a raw dynamo in the ~~fringe~~ canal!

Corbuck pub - Saccobers road tunnel to Sheffield ~~is~~ castle?

The Port of Sheffield audio-walk – Sample field notes

Sample of notes made on walks along the towpath – during conversations with potential contributors and storytellers (March 2012).



Sample of notes and sketches made during the testing and review process for the Port of Sheffield audio-walk (July 2012).

Adam Park  
Graduate School  
School of Architecture  
University of Sheffield  
Arts Tower  
Sheffield S10 2TN

**Festival of The Mind**  
The Western Bank Library  
The National Fairground Archive  
Western Bank  
Sheffield S10 2TN  
England

Date: 24<sup>th</sup> April 2012  
Application number: [Add number]  
Reference number: [Add number]

**Telephone:** +44 (0) 114 222 7258  
**Fax:** +44 (0) 114 222 7290  
**Email:** l.a.allen@sheffield.ac.uk/

Dear Adam

**RE: Festival of The Mind**

I am pleased to inform you that following submission of your application to the Festival of The Mind Award Fund, **£4750.00** has been awarded to support the '**Sheffield and Tinsley Canal Interactive Story Trail**' project.

Funding will be available for the period **16/04/2012 to 30/09/12** and account **X/006246-13-20** has been set up for you to use for the purpose of project delivery. Funds can only be used as per the financial details in your original application form which forms the basis of this award. This is the maximum sum available for this project and funds may not be transferred or used in any other way or to support departmental budgets.

**Acceptance and Conditions**

This award is made subject to the project achieving satisfactory outcomes against the Project Plan and delivery of the stated outputs.

The progress of the project will be monitored against the timescales and financial costing set out in your application. If you are having difficulties with either the timescales or the expenditure, please do not hesitate to contact us as soon as possible in order to discuss a revised schedule.

By accepting the award, you have agreed to engage with the University in order to monitor the progress of the project. This will include making non-confidential aspects available to assist with the development of case studies. Lesley Allen or Lynette Hodges will contact you for brief updates on progress, for both internal and external reporting purposes every 4-6 weeks.

**Funding has been awarded subject to the submission of a final report within 30 days of the project end. All monies should be spent before the report is submitted, at which point your account will be closed and any under spend reclaimed to support future projects.**

**The University of Sheffield** reserves the right to recover funds where there is evidence that the applicant is failing to adhere to the Proposal Summary or the project is seriously underperforming.

A copy of this letter has been sent to your department administrator, Ms Denise Hall who will be able to assist you with accessing the funds.

If you have any questions regarding the above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Lesley Allen', on a light background.

Lesley Allen  
Finance Project Manager  
Festival of the Mind

Cc: Ms Denise Hall







## **Appendix 4: The Port of Sheffield audio-walk – Supporting Information**



### **Project Credits**

#### **Project Team**

Deborah Egan – The Blue Shed

Adam Park

Martin Hogg

Phil Green (Scenograf)

Bobby Tiwana

Stacey Sampson

#### **Project contributors**

The University of Sheffield – Festival of the Mind team

Helen Hornby, Blue Loop / River Stewardship Company

Simon Ogden, Sheffield City Council

Gordon Lambert, CV Marine

Paul Grange, A&G Passenger Boats

Jo Winson, narrator / press coordinator

Leon Henshaw (L2 Design), website design

Oscar Cook, FOTM assistant

Andrew Loretto, Sheffield Theatres

Malcolm Fielding, Canal Project Coordinator, Adsetts

**Other storytellers**

Joe Scarborough, artist and canal resident

Rony Robinson, narrator (BBC Sheffield)

Dave Allen, Blue Loop Volunteer and 1972 Olympian

Pete Jordan, Water Bailiff

Martyn Ware, artist and soundscape designer (Heaven 17 / Illustrious Company)

Dave Allen, local resident and Blue Loop volunteer

Duncan Windram Wheeler, Producer, 'The Full Monty'

SOSA-XA, Sheffield's Southern Africa Choir

Jessica Ennis, 2012 Olympian

Deborah Pullen, local resident

Julie Dore, Leader Sheffield City Council

Darkstorm, artist / producer (Bad Taste Records)

Dave Walker, Tinsley Lockkeeper, Canal & River Trust

Ron Wright, soundscape designer and lecturer (Sheffield Hallam University)

**The Port of Sheffield Mobile Application Development notes**

The Port of Sheffield case study (chapter 9) was a collaboratively produced audio-walk along the route of the Sheffield and Tinsley Canal in the Lower Don Valley, Sheffield. The content of the audio-walk was delivered to participants via a mobile 'smartphone' application (app). The app also invited participants to record and submit their own stories back to the performance-makers and researchers. The process of designing and developing the smartphone app was broadly described in Chapter 9. This appendix provides additional technical details of the two versions of the app, as well as details of the computer scripts used to run the app itself.

**Version 1.0 (September 2012) – Android and iPhone Mobile Application**

The development of version 1.0 of the Port of Sheffield mobile application (app) was undertaken in 2012 by the RECITE researcher (Adam Park) with additional support from both within the University and online (in the form of programming documentation and support communities). The development was initially based on the Apache Cordova platform, which enables designers and developers of mobile apps to access the 'native' functionality of a mobile device (such as the camera or GPS location) using common web development programming languages of HTML, CSS, and JavaScript. Combined with a user interface (UI) framework such as jQuery Mobile, this platform

enables the development of relatively simple smartphone apps without the assistance of specialist programmers or developers.

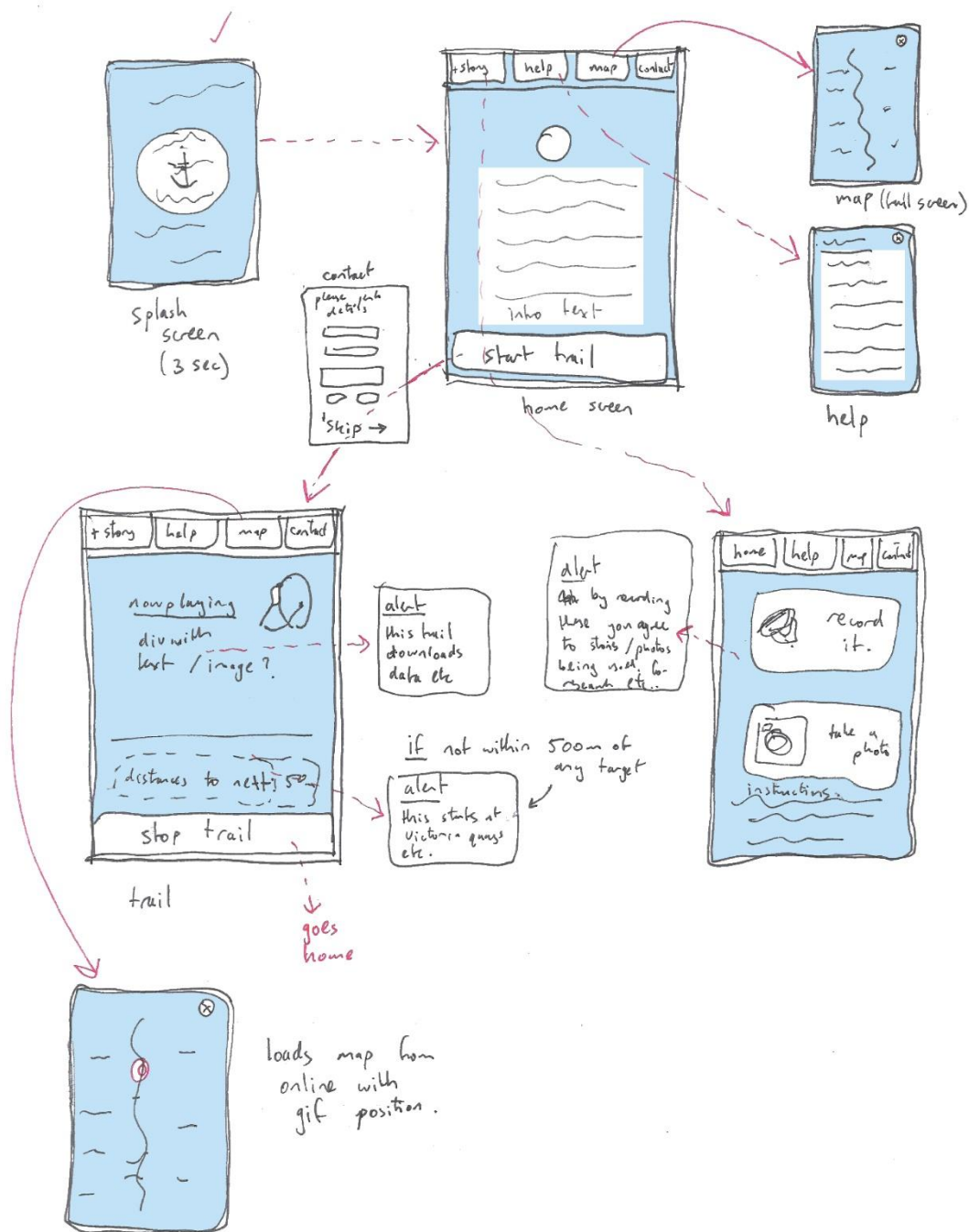


Figure 1. Initial sketch development of app functionality. Image: author.

The app design and functionality was kept deliberately minimal, both to reduce the programming complexity and to focus users' attention on the main functionality, the geo-locative audio content.

The app first directed users to an optional registration page, which asked for a series of details that could later be used in relation to the RECITE research. At this point users were also asked to read

(and confirm that they had read) a series of project guidelines, which warned of the risks of walking along the towpath and offered a series of recommendations in line with the risk assessment (see appendix 2 for further details). Following the registration, users would arrive at the app home screen (figure A4.1), which described the audio-walk project (referred to here as the ‘digital trail’) and those involved in making it. Users were given two main options: ‘Start Trail’ or ‘Add a story’.



Figure 2. Mobile app (version 1.0) home screen. Image: author.

Upon starting the trail, the app would check via a GPS call to determine whether the user was near to the site. If the result of this was negative (i.e. the user was not near to the canal), the app would warn the user that the app was geolocator and that they would need to go to the Sheffield Canal Basin and towpath in order to access the audio-walk content. If they were in range of the start (i.e. within a radius of 50metres of any of the audio locations), the app would download the introductory audio from the RECITE server and play it via the participant’s headphones. This gave further details of the how the app and audio-walk would work. Further audio stories could then be ‘triggered’ by walking along the towpath. As users walked, the app checked their location via GPS every 5 seconds. Each audio file (story) was also assigned a location as a latitude / longitude coordinates. The code then checked the user’s location against the online database where details of the audio files (stories). If a user was within a 50m radius of a story, the audio was also downloaded and played.

Once a story had been played, it could not be triggered a second time. Users were kept updated about the number of stories left to find and the distance to the next-closest stories via a simple line of text at the top of the app.

The 'Add a story' function enabled the user to pause the audio-walk at any point, and upload their own contribution. This could be in the form of a short piece of text, plus an audio recording (via their smartphone microphone), and / or a photo (via their smartphone camera). Once completed, the story upload function would add the story to another database on the RECITE server, complete with a date stamp and location stamp (latitude and longitude). This way, stories could be tied back to the specific time and place that they were recorded.

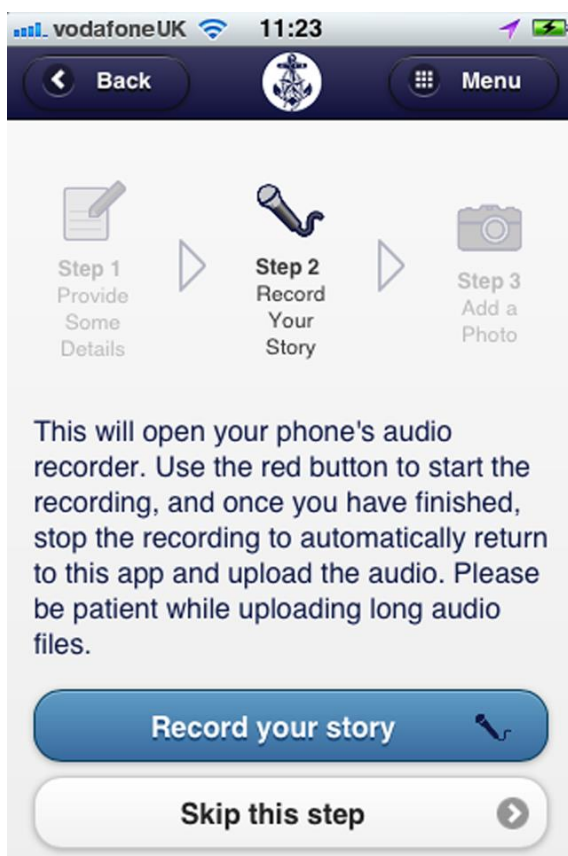


Figure 3. 'Add a Story' interface. Image: author.

Finally, the menu button (top-right on the app) allowed users to find out more about the project, contact the project team, get help with the audio-walk features, or view a map of public transport links back to Sheffield city centre from various points along the towpath.

Version 1.0 was developed as a free download for Google Android smartphones and Apple iOS Phones ('iPhones'), which together represent the vast majority of global smartphone operating

systems.<sup>1</sup> Unlike Android, Apple iOS requires all of its mobile apps to be technically reviewed prior to release for public download. Apple describe the review process as a way of ensuring reliability and performance of iOS apps, as well enabling them to filter out potentially offensive material.<sup>2</sup> The Port of Sheffield iPhone app was submitted to Apple for technical review in August 2012, and was approved and available for download in early September 2012 – just in time for the Festival of the Mind Launch.

### **Version 2.0 (March 2013) – Mobile web application<sup>3</sup>**

In the 6-month period after the launch of the app (September 2012- March 2013), the Port of Sheffield mobile app (Android / iOS) was downloaded 168 times. During this period, data was also collected for the RECITE research in the form of participant questionnaires. Part of this data collection exercise asked participants to feedback on any technical issues faced in using app. Responses covered both the design of the app interface design, use of the app features, and other technical issues experienced by users. In response to this feedback the project team held a review session in April 2013 to review the structure and design of the app. The outcome of this review was the design and re-launch of version 2.0 in summer 2013.

A fundamental development for version 2.0 was the shift away from ‘native’ Android / iOS apps to a web-based app. A web-based app (or ‘web app’) is an interactive website that is optimised for use on a mobile smartphone. This offers a number of advantages over a native app, such as the flexibility of updating the app, and the use of the same code across all operating systems. Users can also access the app by visiting the Port of Sheffield website via a mobile web browser, rather than having to find and download the app via Google ‘Play’ or the Apple ‘App Store’. The disadvantage of using a web-app is the inability to access ‘native’ features of the user’s smartphone such as the camera or microphone. However, given the low response rate for the ‘Add a Story’ feature, the team had already decided to discontinue story upload functionality.

In response to participant feedback, the main user interface of the app was also redesigned in version 2.0. The most significant change was a move to a map-based interface. Users had previously expressed some frustration at ‘not knowing where they were’. This raises a number of interesting issues around cartographic space (also discussed in chapter 3). However, for the audio-walk to be continued to be usable, the team made a collaborative decision to change the interface to an interactive map of the site (the Lower Don Valley). This map allowed users to see their location on a

---

<sup>1</sup> Gartner, 2013 <<http://www.gartner.com/newsroom/id/2573415>> [accessed 7 April 2014].

<sup>2</sup> <https://developer.apple.com/app-store/review/> [accessed 7 April 2014].

<sup>3</sup> As of July 2014, the domain at <<http://www.theportofsheffield.co.uk>> ceased to be operational. A legacy version of the audio-walk web app is available at <<http://mapcodebuild.co.uk/PoS>>



map, along with the locations of all of the audio content (stories). A hand drawn illustration style was used to create the base map layer and represent the key landmarks along the towpath route (see Figure A4.3).

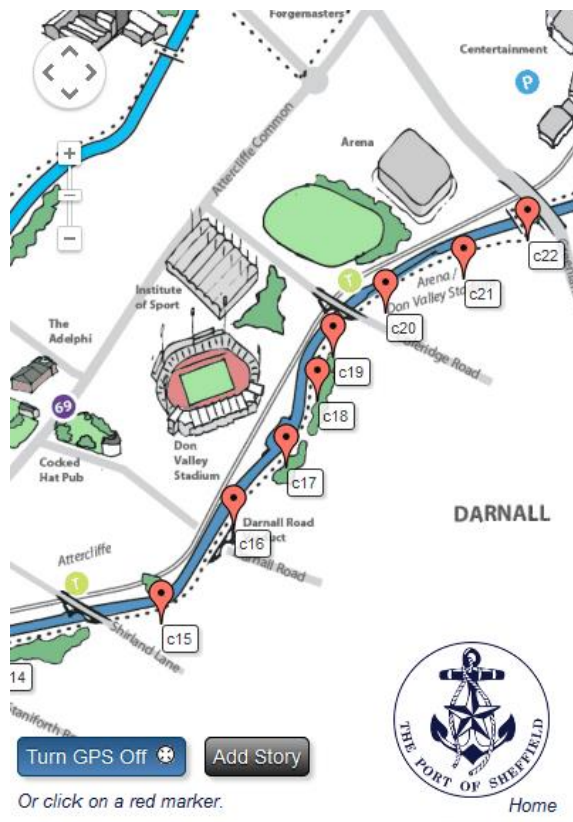


Figure 4. Version 2 interface - an interactive map with audio locations displayed as red markers. Image: author

The app was developed using the Google Maps (v3) Application Programming Interface (API). This allowed the hand drawn map to be positioned as an overlay on top of a Google Maps coordinate system (while hiding the standard Google map view), positioning the map in cartographic space. This structure enabled the display of the stories via their latitude / longitude tag, as well as displaying the user's GPS location, which was accessed using the HTML 5 Geolocation API.

Once the user had navigated through the launch screen and project guidelines, the map was loaded and centred at the Canal basin. Once loaded, the audio-walk functioned in the same way as version 1.0, with users triggering the audio as their position (the 'blue dot') approached each red marker.

**The Port of Sheffield Audio Walk (Version 2.0) – HTML / Javascript Code**

The following code was written by Adam Park (RECITE researcher) for the Port of Sheffield audio-walk app (version 2.0), in collaboration with Deborah Egan (The Blue Shed) and Martin Hogg.

```
<!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Strict//EN"
"http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/DTD/xhtml1-strict.dtd">
<html xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml">
<head>
<title>The Port of Sheffield Digital Trail</title>
  <meta name="viewport" content="width=device-width, initial-scale=1.0,
maximum-scale=1.0, user-scalable=no" />
  <meta name="apple-mobile-web-app-capable" content="yes" />

  <meta http-equiv="content-type" content="text/html; charset=utf-8"/>

  <meta http-equiv='imagetoolbar' content='no' />
<link rel="stylesheet" href="css/pos_map_style.css" />

<style>
  html, body, #map { background:#fff !important; width:100%;
height:100%; margin:0; padding:0; }
</style>

</head>

<body onload="init()">
<div id="loading_overlay" class="pos_overlay">
  <!-- end of intro page 1 -->
<div id="intro_container" class="pos_container">
<div class="intro "id="intro_page1">
  

  <h2>An audio journey to<br />the heart of Sheffield.</h2>

<p>The Port of Sheffield digital trail is located in the Lower Don Valley,
and follows part of the 8-mile long 'Blue Loop' circular walk known along
the River Don and Sheffield & Tinsley Canal. The trail can be started from
Victoria Quays (along the canal) or Kelham Island (along the river) in the
City Centre.

<p>Drawn from historical research and local voices, it tells the story of
the city's East End the crucible of its wealth and history. This
```

interactive map will trigger GPS-located audio and visuals as you walk, so the walk can be dropped into or out of at any point along its route.</p>

<p>Visit the <a href="http://www.theportofsheffield.co.uk/port">Port of Sheffield website</a> to find out more about the ongoing site-specific theatre and performance project.</p>

<p id="welcome" style="margin:20px"><a class="btn" onclick="changePage(1,2);">Click here to start</a></p>

<hr />

<p style="font-size:11px;">The project is a collaboration between The Blue Shed, the University of Sheffield (RECITE) researchers, and the following project partners:</p>

<div id="end\_logos">  
   
   
 <br>  
   
   
   
   
   
 

</div>

</div>

<!-- end of intro page 1 -->

<div class="intro" id="intro\_page2" style="text-align:left;">  
   
 <h2>Digital Trail Guidelines</h2>

<p>Participants should be aware of the dangers of the canal.

All children or young people under 16 must be accompanied by an adult and under close supervision. </p>

<p>The path is 3.5 miles long and takes approximately one hour to walk in

one direction - public transport (Supertram / buses) can be used to return to the City Centre.</p>

<p>Please take care while using headphones / mobile phones (as you would in the course of normal use). It is suggested that the trail should not be undertaken alone outside of daylight hours.</p>

<p>This event takes place on a public towpath. Please be aware that the project team cannot take responsibility for your personal safety or safety of your personal possessions.</p>

<hr />

<form name="ethics\_form">

<h2>Please confirm your consent, and that you have understood information regarding the project guidelines:</h2>

<br />

<fieldset>

<label><input type="checkbox" name="guidelines" /> I confirm that I have read and understood the project guidelines</label>

<br />

</fieldset>

<br />

<a class="btn back-btn" onclick="changePage(2,1);">Back</a>

<a class="btn" onclick="checkTerms();">Continue</a>

</form>

<br />

</div>

<div class="intro" id="intro\_page3" style="text-align:left;">

<h2>Registration</h2>

<p>All data will be confidential</p>

<form id="reg\_form" name="reg\_form">

<div class="row">

<label>Name</label>

<input type="text" name="regName" id="regName" placeholder="Your Name">

```

</div>

    <div class="row">
        <label>Email</label>
        <input type="email" name="regEmail" id="regEmail"
placeholder="Your Email Address">
    </div>

    <div class="row">
        <label>Gender</label>
        <select id="regGender" name="regGender">
<option value=""> -- Please select -- </option>
<option value="male">Male</option>
<option value="female">Female</option>
        </select>
    </div>

    <div class="row">
        <label>Age</label>
        <select name="regAge" id="regAge">
<option value=""> -- Please select -- </option>
<option value="u18">Under 18</option>
<option value="18-30">18-30</option>
<option value="30-45">30-45</option>
<option value="45-60">45-60</option>
<option value="60+">Over 60</option>
        </select>
    </div>

    <div class="row">
        <label>Postcode</label>
        <input type="text" name="regPostcode" id="regPostcode"
maxlength="4" size="4" placeholder="First Part Only (eg. S1)">
    </div>

    <div class="row">
        <label>How well would you say that you know the Sheffield Canal and
its surrounding areas?</label>
        <select name="regCanal" id="regCanal">
<option value=""> -- Please select -- </option>
<option value="none">Not at All</option>

```

```

<option value="notVWell">Not Very Well (visited once or twice)</option>
<option value="quiteWell">Quite Well (visited here several times)</option>
<option value="VWell">Very Well (live in the area or visit
regularly)</option>
    </select>
</div>

<input type="hidden" name="regConsent" id="regConsent" value="">
    <hr>
    <a class="btn back-btn" onclick="changePage(3,2);">Back</a>
    <input id="regBtn" class="btn" type="submit" style="width:160px;"
value="Register Details">

    </form>
    <br />
</div>

<div class="intro" id="intro_page4" style="text-align:left;">

<h2>The Port of Sheffield Interactive Map.</h2>

<p>If you are using a web browser or Smartphone you can use the interactive
map to find and play stories, music or memories of the canal that are near
to you.</p>
<p>If you are experiencing difficulties with the GPS feature, simply click
on any red marker to listen.</p>
<p>Click on the 'Add Story' button on the map to submit your own story of
the Lower Don Valley to the Port of Sheffield project.</p>
<p><i><b>Please note:</b> GPS drains battery life - it is recommended that
your phone is fully charged before starting the trail.</i></p>
<p><i>If you are using a smartphone the trail will download audio using a
3G connection - please ensure that you have adequate data allowance before
continuing (charges may apply).</i></p>

<p><i>By uploading stories via this web app, participants grant permission
for use of this electronic material for the Port of Sheffield arts project
and / or the RECITE research project.</i></p>
<p><i>IMPORTANT - when prompted you must allow the map to use your location
by pressing 'OK'</i></p>
<br />
<a class="btn back-btn" onclick="changePage(4,2);">Back</a>
<a class="btn" onclick="startMap();">Launch Interactive Map</a>
<br />
<br />
<hr>

```

```

<p>Alternatively if you are using an mp3 player, you can download the trail
audio files using the link below.</p>

```

```

<a class="btn back-btn"
href="http://www.theportofsheffield.co.uk/mp3_audio/">Download mp3
Files</a>
<br />
<br />
<hr>

```

```

<p>We hope you enjoy the Port of Sheffield audio walk on the waterways of
the Lower Don Valley!</p>
</div>

```

```

</div>

```

```

</div>
</div>

```

```

<!-- <div id="subheader">Generated by <a
href="http://www.maptiler.org/">MapTiler</a><a
href="http://www.klokan.cz/projects/gdal2tiles/">GDAL2Tiles</a>, Copyright
&copy; 2008 <a href="http://www.klokan.cz/">Klokan Petr Pridal</a>, <a
href="http://www.gdal.org/">GDAL</a> &amp; <a
href="http://www.osgeo.org/">OSGeo</a> <a
href="http://code.google.com/soc/">GSoC</a>
PLEASE, LET THIS NOTE ABOUT AUTHOR AND PROJECT SOMEWHERE
ON YOUR WEBSITE, OR AT LEAST IN THE COMMENT IN HTML. THANK YOU
</div> -->
<div id="subheader">

```

```

<a id="geo_btn" class="btn" style="margin: 0;" onclick="toggleGeo();">Turn
GPS On</a>
<a class="btn back-btn" onclick="$('#add_overlay').css('opacity','1');
toggleContent('add_overlay')">Add Story</a>
<br /> <br />

```

```

<i style="font-size:13px; margin-bottom:10px;">Or click on a red
marker.</i>
</div>
<div id="logo">
  <a onclick="backHome();" style="position: absolute; right:5px;
bottom:10px;">
    </a>
    <i style="font-size:13px; margin:0 0 10px 0;">Home</i>
  </div>
  <div id="audio_overlay" class="pos_overlay" style="visibility:hidden;">
    <div id="audio_window" class="pos_container" >
      <a class="btn back-btn close-btn" onclick="closeAudio();">close</a>
      <div style="margin: 25px auto">
        <h2 id="audio_title"></h2>
        <p id="audio_subtitle">
        </p>
        <div id="audio_image"></div>
        <br />
        <div id="audio_source">

          <audio id="audio_player" controls="controls">
            <source id="audio_player_ogg"
src="http://recite.group.shef.ac.uk/pos_trail/audio/intro.ogg"
type="audio/ogg" />
            <source id="audio_player_mp3"
src="http://recite.group.shef.ac.uk/pos_trail/audio/intro.mp3"
type="audio/mpeg" />
          </audio>
        </div>
      </div>
    </div>
    </div>

    <div id="add_overlay" class="pos_overlay" style="visibility:hidden">
      <!-- end of intro page 1 -->
      <div id="add_container" class="pos_container" >
        <a class="btn back-btn close-btn"
onclick="$('#add_overlay').css('opacity','0');
toggleContent('add_overlay');">close</a>
        <div class="intro" style="text-align:left; margin-left:0">

```



```

<br />
<h2>Add a story to the Port of Sheffield</h2>
<p>By uploading stories via this web app, participants grant
permission for use of this electronic material for the Port of Sheffield
arts project and / or the RECITE research project.</p>
<p>If you have also submitted registration details, you may be
contacted by a member of the Port of Sheffield team to arrange a
recording.</p>
<form id="story_form" name="story_form">
  <div class="row">
    <label>Title</label>
    <input type="text" name="storyTitle" id="storyTitle"
style="width:90%;" placeholder="Story Name or Title">
  </div>
  <div data-role="fieldcontain">
    <label for="storyComment">Please add a few details that
will help use this story (when, where, who?):</label>
    <textarea style="width:90%; height:100px; margin-top:10px"
name="storyComment" id="storyComment" placeholder="Add some details
(optional)"></textarea>
  </div>
  <input type="hidden" name="storyID" id="storyID"
value="">
  <input type="hidden" name="storyLat"
id="storyLat" value="">
  <input type="hidden" name="storyLon"
id="storyLon" value="">
  <input type="hidden" name="storyGender"
id="storyGender" value="">
  <input type="hidden" name="storyAge" id="storyAge"
value="">
  <input type="hidden" name="storyName" id="storyName"
value="">
  <input type="hidden" name="storyEmail"
id="storyEmail" value="">
  <input type="hidden" name="storyPostcode"
id="storyPostcode" value="">
  <input type="hidden" name="storyCanal"
id="storyCanal" value="">
  <input type="hidden" name="storyConsent"
id="storyConsent" value="">

```

```

    <div id="storyBtns" class="hidden">
      <a class="btn back-btn"
onclick="$('#add_overlay').css('opacity','0');
toggleContent('add_overlay');">Back</a><input id="storyBtn" class="btn"
type="submit" value="Submit">

    </div>

  </form>
</div>
</div>
</div>

  <div id="map">The map is currently tested in Firefox / Chrome / Safari.
If you are seeing this message - please try a different browser.</div>
</body>

<script src='https://maps.googleapis.com/maps/api/js?key=
&sensor=false' type='text/javascript'></script>

<script src="https://maptilercdn.s3.amazonaws.com/klokantech.js"></script>

<script src='http://code.jquery.com/jquery-latest.min.js'
type='text/javascript'></script>

<script src='js/text-overlay1.js' type="text/javascript"></script>
<script src='js/post.js' type="text/javascript"></script>
<script src='js/story.js' type="text/javascript"></script>

<script>

// global map variables

var map;
var mapMinZoom = 13;
var mapMaxZoom = 17;
var mapBounds = new google.maps.LatLngBounds(
  new google.maps.LatLng(53.381943, -1.481012),
  new google.maps.LatLng(53.419674, -1.395412));
var mapGetTile = function(x,y,z) {

```

```

    return "img/maptiles/" + z + "/" + x + "/" + y + ".png";
}

function init() {
    var opts = {
        center: new google.maps.LatLng(53.385, -1.465),
        zoom: 15,
        mapTypeControl: false,
        streetViewControl: false,
        zoomControl: true,
        zoomControlOptions: {
            position: google.maps.ControlPosition.TOP_LEFT
        },
        streetViewControl: false,
        minZoom: mapMinZoom,
        maxZoom: mapMaxZoom
    };

    map = new google.maps.Map(document.getElementById('map'), opts);
    map.setMapTypeId(google.maps.MapTypeId.ROADMAP);
    //map.fitBounds(mapBounds);

    var styles = [
    {
    stylers: [
        { visibility: "off" }
    ]
    }
    ];

    map.setOptions({styles: styles});

    var maptiler = new klokantech.MapTilerMapType(map, mapGetTile, mapBounds,
    mapMinZoom, mapMaxZoom);
    //var opacitycontrol = new klokantech.OpacityControl(map, maptiler);
    loadJSONData();

    // Listen for the dragend event
    google.maps.event.addListener(map, 'center_changed', function() {
        if (mapBounds.contains(map.getCenter())) return;

```

```

// We're out of bounds - Move the map back within the bounds

var c = map.getCenter(),
    x = c.lng(),
    y = c.lat(),
    maxX = mapBounds.getNorthEast().lng(),
    maxY = mapBounds.getNorthEast().lat(),
    minX = mapBounds.getSouthWest().lng(),
    minY = mapBounds.getSouthWest().lat();

if (x < minX) x = (minX+0.005);
if (x > maxX) x = (maxX-0.005);
if (y < minY) y = (minY+0.005);
if (y > maxY) y = (maxY-0.005);

map.setCenter(new google.maps.LatLng(y, x));
});

} // end of init function

function loadJSONData(){
    // call in position data from server

    $.ajax({
        type: "GET",
        dataType: 'text',
        jsonp: 'jsoncallback',
        timeout: 30000,
        url: 'locations.php',
        //crossDomain:'true',
        success: function( data ){
            myLocs = jQuery.parseJSON(data);
            //alert(myLocs.length + " locations loaded");
            loadLocations();
        },
        error: function(xhr, status, error) {
            var err = eval("(" + xhr.responseText + ")");
            alert(err.Message);
        }
    });
}

```

```

function loadLocations() {

    for (var i=0; i < (myLocs.length); i++) {

        var r = myLocs[i];

        var myLatLng = new google.maps.LatLng(r.lat,r.lon);

        var customTxt = "<div>"+r.display_id+"</div>";
        new TxtOverlay(myLatLng,customTxt, 'textBox',map,r.id);

        var iconCol;
        if (r.display_id.indexOf('c') > -1) iconCol = "img/red-dot.png";
        else iconCol = "img/yellow-dot.png";

        //superseded version for displaying an array of standard markers
        markers.push(new google.maps.Marker({
            map: map,
            position: myLatLng,
            title: r.title,
            icon: iconCol
        }));

        (function () {
            var t = myLocs[i].id-1;
            google.maps.event.addListener(markers[markers.length-1], 'click',
function() {
                openAudio(t);
            });
        })();

    }
} //end of load locations function

//global variables
var opacity = 1;
var aud;
var nowPlaying = false;
var hybridOverlay;

```

```

var tempMarker;
var markers = [];
var myLocs, myPos, geo, me;
var isGeoOn = false;

function hideAddressBar() {
  if(!window.location.hash)
  {
    if(document.height <= window.outerHeight + 10)
    {
      document.body.style.height = (window.outerHeight + 150) + 'px';
      setTimeout( function(){ window.scrollTo(0, 1); }, 50 );
    }
    else
    {
      setTimeout( function(){ window.scrollTo(0, 1); }, 0 );
    }
  }
}

// Try HTML5 geolocation

function geoLocate() {
  //alert("getting location");
  if(navigator.geolocation) {
    navigator.geolocation.getCurrentPosition(function(position) {
      myPos = new google.maps.LatLng(position.coords.latitude,
                                      position.coords.longitude);

      //alert(map.getBounds());

      if (mapBounds.contains(myPos) === false) {

        var message = "Current location off of the map!";
        $('#loading_text i').html(message);

        if ($('#pos_overlay').css('visibility')== 'hidden') {
          //alert(message);
          alert(message);
        }
      }
      geoOff();
    }
  }
}

```

```

}

else {

    try { me.setMap(null); }
    catch(err) {
console.log(err.message);
    }

    me = new google.maps.Marker({
        map: map,
        position: myPos,
        title: 'Location found using HTML5.',
        icon: "img/blue-dot-circle.png",
        optimized: false
    });

    //console.log(myPos);
    map.setCenter(myPos);

    updatePosition();
    // $("#geo_btn").html('Turn GPS Off');
}

}, function() {
    handleNoGeolocation(true);
});
} else {
    // Browser doesn't support Geolocation
    handleNoGeolocation(false);
}

}

function handleNoGeolocation(errorFlag) {
    var e_message;
    if (errorFlag) {
        e_message = 'Error: The Geolocation service failed.';
    }
    else {
        e_message = 'Error: Your browser doesn\'t support

```

```

geolocation.';
    }

    $('#loading_text i').html(e_message);
    if ($('#pos_overlay').css('visibility')== 'hidden') {
        alert(e_message);
    }
geoOff();
}

function openAudio(i) {
    var r = myLocs[i];
    geoOff();
    if (nowPlaying === false) {
        //markers[id].setAttribute('class', 'textBox_played');
        //markers[id].style.background-color = "#c8b6b5";
        //markers[id].style.border = "1px solid #776d6d";

        markers[i].setAnimation(google.maps.Animation.BOUNCE);
        setTimeout(function () {

            markers[i].setAnimation(null);

            $('#audio_title').html(r.title);
            $('#audio_subtitle').html(r.subtitle);

            if (r.image_available == 1){
                $('#audio_image').css('background-image','url("trail_files/img/' +
                (i+1) + '.png")');
            }

            else {
                $('#audio_image').css('background-
image','url("trail_files/img/0.png")');
            }

            var source = '<audio id="audio_player" controls>';
            source += '<source id="audio_player_mp3" src="trail_files/audio/' +
            r.display_id + '.mp3" type="audio/mpeg" />';
            source += '<source id="audio_player_ogg" src="trail_files/audio/' +
            r.display_id + '.ogg" type="audio/ogg" />';

```



```

    source += '</audio>';
    $('#audio_source').html(source);

    aud = $('#audio_player').get(0);
    aud.play();
    nowPlaying = true;
    toggleContent('audio_overlay');
    markers[i].setIcon('img/grey-dot.png');
    myLocs[i].played = 1;

    aud.addEventListener('ended', function() {
        closeAudio();
        geoOn();
    });

    }, 1500);
}
else { closeAudio(); }
} //end openAudio

function openAudioIntro() {
    geoOff();
    if (nowPlaying === false) {

        setTimeout(function () {

            $('#audio_title').html("Introduction");
            $('#audio_subtitle').html("The Port of Sheffield Digital Trail. Read by
Deborah Egan");

            $('#audio_image').css('background-
image', 'url("trail_files/img/0.png")');

            var source = '<audio id="audio_player" controls>';
            source += '<source id="audio_player_mp3"
src="trail_files/audio/intro.mp3" type="audio/mpeg" />';
            source += '<source id="audio_player_ogg"
src="trail_files/audio/intro.ogg" type="audio/ogg" />';
            source += '</audio>';
            $('#audio_source').html(source);

```

```

aud = $('#audio_player').get(0);
    aud.play();
    nowPlaying = true;
    toggleContent('audio_overlay');

    aud.addEventListener('ended', function() {
        closeAudio();
        geoOn();
    });

    },1500);

}
else { closeAudio(); }
} //end openAudio

function closeAudio() {
    aud.pause();
    toggleContent('audio_overlay');
    nowPlaying = false;
    geoOn();
}

function toggleContent(element) {
    var el = document.getElementById(element);
    el.style.visibility = (el.style.visibility == "hidden") ? "visible" :
"hidden";
}

function toggleGeo() {
    if (isGeoOn === true) {
        geoOff();
    }

    //to switch geolocation off
    else {
        geoOn();
    }
}

```

```

function geoOn() {
  isGeoOn = true;
  console.log(isGeoOn);
  $("#geo_btn").addClass('on-btn');
  $("#geo_btn").html('Turn GPS Off');
  setTimeout(function () {geoLocate()}, 2000);
  geo = self.setInterval(function() {geoLocate()}, 30000);
}

function geoOff() {
  isGeoOn = false;
  console.log(isGeoOn);
  $("#geo_btn").removeClass('on-btn');
  geo = window.clearInterval(geo);
  $("#geo_btn").html('Turn GPS On');

  $('#subheader i').html("Or click on a red marker.");

  try {me.setMap(null);}
  catch(err) {
    console.log(err.message);
  }
}

function updatePosition() {
  var radius = 60;
  var R = 6371; // km (change this constant to get miles)

  var distanceCheck = new Array(); // create new array (reset on each
  geoSuccess) for nearest distance at the start

  // start big loop
  for (var i=1; i<myLocs.length; i++){

    // Haversine formula to calculate distances

    var dLat = ((myLocs[i].lat) - myPos.lat() ) * Math.PI / 180; //
    lat2 - lat1 converted to radians

```

```

        var dLon = ((myLocs[i].lon) - myPos.lng() ) * Math.PI / 180;    //
lon2 - lon1 converted to radians
        var a = Math.sin(dLat/2) * Math.sin(dLat/2) + Math.cos(myPos.lat()
* Math.PI / 180 ) * Math.cos((myLocs[i].lat) * Math.PI / 180 ) *
Math.sin(dLon/2) * Math.sin(dLon/2);
        var c = 2 * Math.atan2(Math.sqrt(a), Math.sqrt(1-a));

myLocs[i].distance= R * c * 1000; //convert to metres and add to
distance column of myLocs array


        if(myLocs[i].played == 0){

            distanceCheck.splice(0,0,myLocs[i].distance); // add distances to new
'distanceCheck' array (only if the boolean played? is false)
        }
        // console.log(distanceCheck);
        ////////////////

        if ( myLocs[i].distance < radius && myLocs[i].played == 0 &&
nowPlaying === false) {

            openAudio(i);
            break;
        }

    } // end of loop

    //calculate the smallest value of new distances array
    var nearest = Math.round(Math.min.apply(0, distanceCheck));
$('#subheader i').html("Walk " + nearest + "m to find the next story");

}

</script>

</html>

```





## **Appendix 5: Research ethics documentation**

### **Initial research ethics application (April 2011)**

- A) Research Ethics Application Form
- B) Participant Information Document
- C) Research Ethics Approval Letter

### **Revised research ethics application (August 2012)**

- D) Research Ethics Application Form
- E) Participant Information Document
- F) Port of Sheffield Risk Assessment
- G) Research Ethics Approval Letter

**Data and Human Tissue', as shown on the University's research ethics website**  
**at: <http://www.shef.ac.uk/ris/other/gov-ethics/researchethics/index.html>**

## Part A

A1. Title of Research Project: *How can the documentation and visualisation of outdoor theatre in urban spaces provide a platform for interaction between audience, performer and the cityscape?*

A2. **Contact person** (normally the Principal Investigator, in the case of staff-led research projects, or the student in the case of supervised-postgraduate researcher projects):

Title: Mr First Name/Initials: Adam C Last Name: Park  
 Post: PhD Candidate Department: Architecture  
 Email: arp10acp@shef.ac.uk Telephone: 07810470364 / 0114 222 3081

A2.1. **Is this a postgraduate researcher project? Yes**

**If yes, please provide the Supervisor's contact details:**

Dr Chengzhi Peng, School of Architecture

[c.peng@shef.ac.uk](mailto:c.peng@shef.ac.uk) / 0114 222 0318

A2.2. **Other key investigators/co-applicants** (within/outside University), where applicable:

Please list all (add more rows if necessary)

Title	Full Name	Post	Responsibility in project	Organisation	Department
Dr	Daniela Romano	Senior Lecturer	2 <sup>nd</sup> Supervisor	University of Sheffield	Computer Science

A3. **Proposed Project Duration:**

Start date: 9<sup>th</sup> April 2011

End date: -

A4. **Mark 'X' in one or more of the following boxes if your research:**

<input type="checkbox"/>	involves <i>no</i> access to identifiable personal data <b>and</b> <i>no</i> direct contact with participants
<input type="checkbox"/>	involves adults with mental incapacity or mental illness
<input type="checkbox"/>	involves prisoners or others in custodial care (e.g. young offenders)
<input type="checkbox"/>	involves children or young people aged under 18 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	involves using samples of human biological material collected before for another purpose
<input type="checkbox"/>	involves taking new samples of human biological material (e.g. blood, tissue) *
<input type="checkbox"/>	involves testing a medicinal product *
<input type="checkbox"/>	involves taking new samples of human biological material (e.g. blood, tissue) *
<input type="checkbox"/>	involves additional radiation above that required for clinical care *
<input type="checkbox"/>	involves investigating a medical device *

\* If you have marked boxes marked \* then you also need to obtain confirmation that appropriate University insurance is in place. The procedure for doing so is entirely by email. Please send an email addressed to [insurance@shef.ac.uk](mailto:insurance@shef.ac.uk) and request a copy of the 'Clinical Trial Insurance Application Form'.



# University Research Ethics Application Form

It is recommended that you familiarise yourself with the University's Ethics Policy Governing Research Involving Human Participants, Personal Data and Human Tissue before completing the following questions. Please note that if you provide sufficient information about the research (what you intend to do, how it will be carried out and how you intend to minimise any risks), this will help the ethics reviewers to make an informed judgement quickly without having to ask for further details.

**A5. Briefly summarise:**

**i. The project's aims and objectives:**

(this must be in language comprehensible to a lay person)

The series of open-ended interviews aims to generate a fuller understanding of the issues relating to:

The process of staging outdoor performances, documenting theatre, widening participation in theatre, and managing outdoor events.

**ii. The project's methodology:**

(this must be in language comprehensible to a lay person)

The methodology for the part of the research subject to this ethics review procedure is the 'expert review'. This comprises of semi-structured, in-depth, 'elite interviews' with organisations identified as relevant to the research through the RECITE research network. The interview schedule includes the creative director of 'Sheffield Theatres', City Council event management team, and the creative director or experienced outdoor theatre company 'Slung Low', who are based in Leeds.

This series of interviews are designed to reach individuals identified as having an overarching view of the relevant organisation they are part of. This is particularly important for this project due to multi-disciplinary approach, but also because the researcher's background is primarily architectural and not theatrical.

**A6. What is the potential for physical and/or psychological harm / distress to participants?**

No potential for physical or psychological harm.

**A7. Does your research raise any issues of personal safety for you or other researchers involved in the project? (especially if taking place outside working hours or off University premises)**

Yes – one of the interviews is to be carried out on the working set of an theatre production in Hull.

**If yes, explain how these issues will be managed.**

Contact the company prior to the day of interview to check the nature of the set and interview offices, and if any Personal Protective Equipment is required / provided.

Where appropriate, receive a health and safety briefing from the person responsible for managing the set. Follow the company's on-site health and safety procedures at all times.

Ahead of any visits I will ensure that there is a nominated telephone contact person at the University (Dr Peng), who will have precise details of time and location of the visit, and will be advised once I have safely left the site if not returning to the department.

**A8. How will the potential participants in the project be:**

**i. Identified?**

Identified through contacts with the RECITE research network and via organisations relevant to the area of study (City Council, theatre companies)

**ii. Approached?**

Approached via email letter explaining the aims of the project and need to carry out an 'expert review'.

**iii. Recruited?**

Recruitment is only possible through agreement to participate by responding to the email letter.

**A9. Will informed consent be obtained from the participants?**

YES ☒ NO ☐

**If informed consent or consent is NOT to be obtained please explain why.**

Further guidance is at: <http://www.shef.ac.uk/ris/other/gov-ethics/researchethics/policy-notes/consent>

=

**A9.1. This question is only applicable if you are planning to obtain informed consent:  
How do you plan to obtain informed consent? (i.e. the proposed process?):**

Circulate the participant information document to interviewees prior to the interview (this contains details of the consent form and reasons for having one).

On the day of the interview, provide interviewees with consent form for their signature prior to starting the interview.

**A10. What measures will be put in place to ensure confidentiality of personal data, where appropriate?**

Participant's right to confidentiality and anonymity is set out in the consent form. Should they wish the information they provide to remain confidential, it will be stored only on the personal research computer of the student researcher (password protected),

**A11. Will financial / in kind payments (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants? (Indicate how much and on what basis this has been decided)**

No

**A12. Will the research involve the production of recorded media such as audio and/or video recordings?**

YES ☒ NO ☐

**A12.1. This question is only applicable if you are planning to produce recorded media:  
How will you ensure that there is a clear agreement with participants as to how these recorded media may be stored, used and (if appropriate) destroyed?**

This is clearly explained to participants in the consent form and the participant information document.

Guidance on a range of ethical issues, including safety and well-being, consent and anonymity, confidentiality and data protection are available at:  
<http://www.shef.ac.uk/ris/other/gov-ethics/researchethics/policy-notes>

# University Research Ethics Application Form

## Part B – The Signed Declaration

**Title of Research Project:** *How can the documentation and visualisation of outdoor theatre in urban spaces provide a platform for interaction between audience, performer and the cityscape?*

I confirm my responsibility to deliver the research project in accordance with the University of Sheffield's policies and procedures, which include the University's 'Financial Regulations', 'Good Research Practice Standards' and the 'Ethics Policy Governing Research Involving Human Participants, Personal Data and Human Tissue' (Ethics Policy) and, where externally funded, with the terms and conditions of the research funder.

**In signing this research ethics application form I am also confirming that:**

- The form is accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.
- The project will abide by the University's Ethics Policy.
- There is no potential material interest that may, or may appear to, impair the independence and objectivity of researchers conducting this project.
- Subject to the research being approved, I undertake to adhere to the project protocol without unagreed deviation and to comply with any conditions set out in the letter from the University ethics reviewers notifying me of this.
- I undertake to inform the ethics reviewers of significant changes to the protocol (by contacting my academic department's Ethics Administrator in the first instance).
- I am aware of my responsibility to be up to date and comply with the requirements of the law and relevant guidelines relating to security and confidentiality of personal data, including the need to register when necessary with the appropriate Data Protection Officer (within the University the Data Protection Officer is based in CiCS).
- I understand that the project, including research records and data, may be subject to inspection for audit purposes, if required in future.
- I understand that personal data about me as a researcher in this form will be held by those involved in the ethics review procedure (e.g. the Ethics Administrator and/or ethics reviewers) and that this will be managed according to Data Protection Act principles.
- If this is an application for a 'generic' project all the individual projects that fit under the generic project are compatible with this application.
- **I understand that this project cannot be submitted for ethics approval in more than one department, and that if I wish to appeal against the decision made, this must be done through the original department.**

**Name of the Principal Investigator (or the name of the Supervisor if this is a postgraduate researcher project):**

**Chengzhi Peng**

**If this is a postgraduate researcher project insert the student's name here:**

**Adam Park**

**Signature of Principal Investigator (or the Supervisor):**

**Date:**

Email the completed application form and provide a signed, hard copy of 'Part B' to the Ethics Administrator (also enclose, if relevant, other documents).



# Participant Information Document

## for PGR student research

Project title:

*How can the documentation and visualisation of outdoor theatre in urban spaces provide a platform for interaction between audience, performer and the cityscape?*

Postgraduate student responsible for the research:

*Adam Park, PhD Candidate, University of Sheffield, School of Architecture.*

[arp10acp@shef.ac.uk](mailto:arp10acp@shef.ac.uk) 07810470364 / 0114 222 3081

Research Supervisor:

*Dr Chengzhi Peng, Senior Lecturer, University of Sheffield, School of Architecture.*

[c.peng@shef.ac.uk](mailto:c.peng@shef.ac.uk) 0114 222 0318

Research Objectives:

*I am from an architectural research background, and am carrying out a study into city spaces that are specifically used for outdoor performance. The purpose of this research is to better understand the complex and often hidden relationships between people, performers and urban space in the staging of outdoor theatre.*

*Architectural designers and researchers commonly use visual communication tools, skills that could be exploited and tested within the context of documenting performances. The project will test methods for the documenting of the physical, social and 'live' conditions of performance sites, and explore at how the variety of stakeholders in urban space who might interact with the resulting virtual models.*

*At this early stage of the research project I am interviewing a range of people (including local authority managers & planners, theatre curators and performers) with an open-ended framework of questions. I hope to find out more about your perspective on the subject and explore the broad range of issues associated with staging performance events in the public realm.*

# Participant Information Document

## for PGR student research

This research, which may involve surveys, interviews, documentary analysis and observation, must conform to the conditions under which it received ethical approval in the University of Sheffield School of Architecture. Researchers are required to respect confidentiality and to maintain the anonymity of all participants.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary.

All participants have a right to participate, withdraw from, or refuse to take part in the research project at any time in the process. Similarly, any information that has been supplied can be withdrawn at any stage during the project

The interview will last approximately 1 hour, at a time, date and location arranged and agreed with participants prior to the interview

The interview will be recorded using either audio or video media. Any recorded media will be used only in conjunction with the research project, and will not be made public without the prior consent of individuals concerned. All recorded media is to be stored securely and anonymously, and destroyed upon the completion of the research or on the request of the participant.

All participants have the right for all information provided to remain confidential, and the right to remain anonymous in any written report.

After you have read this information document you will be invited to complete a **Consent Form** before the interview commences.

If there is concern about any aspect of this research project it should be addressed in the first instance to the research student, and then to the tutor supervising the work (contact details above).

In addition to these avenues the University also has a complaints procedure, details of which may be found at: [www.shef.ac.uk/ssid/procedures/grid.html#complaints](http://www.shef.ac.uk/ssid/procedures/grid.html#complaints)

*Thank you for considering participating in this small scale study.*



The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.

School  
Of  
Architecture.

Adam Park  
School of Architecture

Judith Torrington

School of Architecture  
The Arts Tower  
Western Bank  
Sheffield  
S10 2TN

Monday, 04 April 2011

**Telephone:** +44 (0) 114 2220346

**Fax:** +44 (0) 114 279826

**Email:** j.m.torrington@sheffield.ac.uk

Dear Adam

**PROJECT TITLE:** *How can the documentation and visualisation of outdoor theatre in urban spaces provide a platform for interaction between audience, performer and the cityscape?*

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 01/04/2011 the above-named project was unconditionally **approved** on ethics grounds, on the basis that you will adhere to the following document that you submitted for ethics review:

- University research ethics application form
- Interview consent form

If during the course of the project you need to deviate significantly from the above-approved document please inform me since written approval will be required. Please also inform me should you decide to terminate the project prematurely.

Yours sincerely

Judy Torrington  
Ethics Administrator



THE QUEEN'S  
ANNIVERSARY PRIZES  
FOR HIGHER AND FURTHER EDUCATION

2007



**Data and Human Tissue', as shown on the University's research ethics website**at: <http://www.shef.ac.uk/ris/other/gov-ethics/researchethics/index.html>**Part A**

A1. Title of Research Project: Context- aware: The production of the 'locative intervention' as *critical spatial practice* and *collaborative methodology* in articulating or 'mapping' place-identity.

A2. **Contact person** (normally the Principal Investigator, in the case of staff-led research projects, or the student in the case of supervised-postgraduate researcher projects):

Title: Mr First Name/Initials: Adam C Last Name: Park  
 Post: PhD Candidate Department: Architecture  
 Email: adam.park@shef.ac.uk Telephone: 07810470364

A2.1. **Is this a postgraduate researcher project? Yes**

**If yes, please provide the Supervisor's contact details:**

Dr Chengzhi Peng, School of Architecture

[c.peng@shef.ac.uk](mailto:c.peng@shef.ac.uk) / 0114 222 0318

A2.2. **Other key investigators/co-applicants** (within/outside University), where applicable:

Please list all (add more rows if necessary)

Title	Full Name	Post	Responsibility in project	Organisation	Department
	Deborah Egan	Director	Creative Partner	The Blue Shed	-

A3. **Proposed Project Duration:**

Start date: 21<sup>st</sup> September 2012

End date: -

A4. **Mark 'X' in one or more of the following boxes if your research:**

<input type="checkbox"/>	involves <i>no</i> access to identifiable personal data <b>and</b> <i>no</i> direct contact with participants
<input type="checkbox"/>	involves adults with mental incapacity or mental illness
<input type="checkbox"/>	involves prisoners or others in custodial care (e.g. young offenders)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	involves children or young people aged under 18 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	involves using samples of human biological material collected before for another purpose
<input type="checkbox"/>	involves taking new samples of human biological material (e.g. blood, tissue) *
<input type="checkbox"/>	involves testing a medicinal product *
<input type="checkbox"/>	involves taking new samples of human biological material (e.g. blood, tissue) *
<input type="checkbox"/>	involves additional radiation above that required for clinical care *
<input type="checkbox"/>	involves investigating a medical device *

\* If you have marked boxes marked \* then you also need to obtain confirmation that appropriate University insurance is in place. The procedure for doing so is entirely by email. Please send an email addressed to [insurance@shef.ac.uk](mailto:insurance@shef.ac.uk) and request a copy of the 'Clinical Trial Insurance Application Form'.



# University Research Ethics Application Form

It is recommended that you familiarise yourself with the University's Ethics Policy Governing Research Involving Human Participants, Personal Data and Human Tissue before completing the following questions. Please note that if you provide sufficient information about the research (what you intend to do, how it will be carried out and how you intend to minimise any risks), this will help the ethics reviewers to make an informed judgement quickly without having to ask for further details.

## A5. Briefly summarise:

### i. The project's aims and objectives:

(this must be in language comprehensible to a lay person)

This project aims to test a collaborative, artistic approach to researching the place-identity of an area of Sheffield. The case study has been developed to address the question: Can participatory site-specific practices provoke a different level of engagement with site than everyday inhabitation or use?

Working closely alongside an arts company (The Blue Shed), the researcher will observe the process of creating a site-specific performance (audio walk), and use the performance to collect data from the audience of the site in question.

The audio trail will be delivered via a Smartphone App, and some methods of data collection will be integrated into this platform.

### ii. The project's methodology:

(this must be in language comprehensible to a lay person)

Key to the study of any live arts practice is access to the processes of design and production, and the response of the audience.

Data collection will take place during the 10 day period of the 'Festival of the Mind'. Three methods of collecting qualitative data from participants of the audio trail will be employed; through the Smartphone App itself, a post-event survey and a series of reflective interviews with selected participants. Both the Festival of the Mind and audio trail are free and fully open to the public.

Upon registering for the trail (or downloading the app), participants will be asked whether they consent to participating in the research project. If consent is given, participants will be asked for contact details and be added to a secure database.

The purpose of building in data collection ('add you story function') to the app is collect information 'in the moment'. This dataset is submitted anonymously. Before any data is collected, held, or used for research purposes, participants will receive clear notification and accept **prior** to them submitting any data electronically.

Within 24 hours of completing the trail, participants will be contacted via email with a link to an online survey. Participants will then be asked to respond to a set of mixed open and closed questions regarding the experience.

The final stage is a series of semi-structured interviews with selected participants. The purpose of the interviews will be to ask participants to reflect on their experience of 'performing' the audio walk and gain more in-depth, reflective responses.

Participants under the age of 18 are able to participate via the app and online survey, but there will be no direct contact with the researchers and they will not be invited for interview.

**A6. What is the potential for physical and/or psychological harm / distress to participants?**

No potential for physical or psychological harm in the course of the research.

As part of their process, creative partners The Blue Shed have carried out a joint risk assessment (attached to this form).

**A7. Does your research raise any issues of personal safety for you or other researchers involved in the project? (especially if taking place outside working hours or off University premises)**

Yes – potentially during visits to the canal to trial data collection, and lone-working during the event.

**If yes, explain how these issues will be managed.**

The towpath is generally well-used and poses limited personal safety risk. Tests along the canal will only be carried out during daylight hours, and no unnecessary risks will be taken.

For further details regarding project participants and the data collection event, please see attached risk assessment.

**A8. How will the potential participants in the project be:**

**i. Identified?**

Participants will be self-identifying through their interest in taking part in the audio-walk.

**ii. Approached?**

They will be approached at the point of registering for the trail (whether physically or virtually), at which point the aims of the research project will be clearly set out in the Participant Information Document.

**iii. Recruited?**

Recruitment to the survey and interview stages is only possible through agreement to participate by responding to the email letter.

**A9. Will informed consent be obtained from the participants?**

YES ☒ NO ☐

**If informed consent or consent is NOT to be obtained please explain why.**

Further guidance is at: <http://www.shef.ac.uk/ris/other/gov-ethics/researchethics/policy-notes/consent>

**A9.1.** This question is only applicable if you are planning to obtain informed consent:  
**How do you plan to obtain informed consent? (i.e. the proposed process?):**

Participants will be approached at the point of registering for the trial (whether physically or virtually). At this point the aims of the research project will be clearly set out in the Participant Information Document.

Informed consent will be then obtained by voluntary completion of a contact form (either written or electronic).

Prior to any the interview participant information document will be resent to interviewees (this contains details of the consent form and reasons for having one).

On the day of the interview, provide interviewees with consent form for their signature prior to starting the interview.

**A10.** What measures will be put in place to ensure confidentiality of personal data, where appropriate?

Participant's right to confidentiality and anonymity is set out in the contact /consent form.

Should they wish the information they provide to remain confidential, this will be recorded at the time of taking details, and then only will be used without name data attached, and stored only on the personal research computer of the student researcher (password protected).

**A11.** Will financial / in kind payments (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants? (Indicate how much and on what basis this has been decided)

No.

**A12.** Will the research involve the production of recorded media such as audio and/or video recordings?

YES ☒ NO ☐

**A12.1.** This question is only applicable if you are planning to produce recorded media:  
**How will you ensure that there is a clear agreement with participants as to how these recorded media may be stored, used and (if appropriate) destroyed?**

This is clearly explained to participants in the consent form and the participant information document.

Before any data is collected via the app, held, or used for research purposes, participants will receive clear notification and accept **prior** to them submitting any data electronically.

Guidance on a range of ethical issues, including safety and well-being, consent and anonymity, confidentiality and data protection are available at:

<http://www.shef.ac.uk/ris/other/gov-ethics/researchethics/policy-notes>

# University Research Ethics Application Form

## Part B – The Signed Declaration

**Title of Research Project:** *How can the documentation and visualisation of outdoor theatre in urban spaces provide a platform for interaction between audience, performer and the cityscape?*

I confirm my responsibility to deliver the research project in accordance with the University of Sheffield's policies and procedures, which include the University's 'Financial Regulations', 'Good Research Practice Standards' and the 'Ethics Policy Governing Research Involving Human Participants, Personal Data and Human Tissue' (Ethics Policy) and, where externally funded, with the terms and conditions of the research funder.

**In signing this research ethics application form I am also confirming that:**

- The form is accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.
- The project will abide by the University's Ethics Policy.
- There is no potential material interest that may, or may appear to, impair the independence and objectivity of researchers conducting this project.
- Subject to the research being approved, I undertake to adhere to the project protocol without unagreed deviation and to comply with any conditions set out in the letter from the University ethics reviewers notifying me of this.
- I undertake to inform the ethics reviewers of significant changes to the protocol (by contacting my academic department's Ethics Administrator in the first instance).
- I am aware of my responsibility to be up to date and comply with the requirements of the law and relevant guidelines relating to security and confidentiality of personal data, including the need to register when necessary with the appropriate Data Protection Officer (within the University the Data Protection Officer is based in CiCS).
- I understand that the project, including research records and data, may be subject to inspection for audit purposes, if required in future.
- I understand that personal data about me as a researcher in this form will be held by those involved in the ethics review procedure (e.g. the Ethics Administrator and/or ethics reviewers) and that this will be managed according to Data Protection Act principles.
- If this is an application for a 'generic' project all the individual projects that fit under the generic project are compatible with this application.
- **I understand that this project cannot be submitted for ethics approval in more than one department, and that if I wish to appeal against the decision made, this must be done through the original department.**

**Name of the Principal Investigator (or the name of the Supervisor if this is a postgraduate researcher project):**

**Chengzhi Peng**

**If this is a postgraduate researcher project insert the student's name here:**

**Adam Park**

**Signature of Principal Investigator (or the Supervisor):**

*Chengzhi Peng*

**Date:** *26/07/2012*

Email the completed application form and provide a signed, hard copy of 'Part B' to the Ethics Administrator (also enclose, if relevant, other documents).



The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.

**RECITE**



# Participant Information Document

## for PGR student research

### Project title

*Context- aware: The production of the 'locative intervention' as critical spatial practice and collaborative methodology in articulating or 'mapping' place-identity.*

### Postgraduate student

Adam Park, PhD Candidate, RECITE group, University of Sheffield, School of Architecture.

[adam.park@shef.ac.uk](mailto:adam.park@shef.ac.uk) 07810470364

### Research Supervisor

Dr Chengzhi Peng, Senior Lecturer, University of Sheffield, School of Architecture.

[c.peng@shef.ac.uk](mailto:c.peng@shef.ac.uk) 0114 222 0318

### Research Objectives

*I am from an architectural research background, and am carrying out a study into mapping city spaces through 'site-specific' arts practices such as outdoor theatre, audio tours, and locative (GPS) media. The project is being carried out in collaboration with local theatre producers, The Blue Shed and with the support of Sheffield Theatres and funding from the University of Sheffield 'Festival of the Mind'.*

*The purpose of this research is to better understand the impacts of participating in these types of performance, and whether this artistic engagement might articulate a different type of knowledge about a place. Architectural designers and researchers commonly use visual communication tools such as plans, maps and models. The project will test methods for the mapping some of the stories, memories, and elusive qualities of a place that are often absent from official documents and maps.*

## **Ethical Approval**

This research, which will involve surveys, interviews, documentary analysis and observation, must conform to the conditions under which it received ethical approval in the University of Sheffield School of Architecture. Researchers are required to respect confidentiality and to maintain the anonymity of all participants.

Part of the production of the Blue Shed / Sheffield Theatres 'Digital Trail' will ask participants to 'add their story' to the trail – via electronic submission of audio / visual material via the website or Smartphone app. Submissions can be anonymously and are entirely voluntary, and participants are free to withdraw from the project at any time.

Before uploading and stories, participants will be asked to grant permission to use this electronic material for the Port of Sheffield arts project and / or the RECITE research project. Any recorded media will be used only in conjunction with these projects, and will not shared or used for any other commercial purposes or public release.

The identity of individuals will not be made public without the prior consent of individuals concerned. All recorded media related to the project is to be stored securely and anonymously, and destroyed upon the completion of the research.

Further information regarding this research is also available via the project website and Smartphone app, along with the 'Digital Trail' project guidelines (health and safety briefing).

## **Concerns and / or Complaints**

If there is concern about any aspect of this research project it should be addressed in the first instance to the research student, and then to the tutor supervising the work (contact details above).

In addition to these avenues the University also has a complaints procedure, details of which may be found at: [www.shef.ac.uk/ssid/procedures/grid.html#complaints](http://www.shef.ac.uk/ssid/procedures/grid.html#complaints)

*Thank you for considering participating in this research project.*



		<b>Date of Assessment:</b> 7/08/2012				
<b>Project Name:</b> The Port of Sheffield Interactive Story Trail		<b>Assessment team:</b> Adam Park (University of Sheffield School of Architecture) Deborah Egan (The Blue Shed)				
<b>Project Location:</b> Sheffield and Tinsley Canal Towpath (from Victoria Quays to Tinsley Locks)		Do the hazards create a business continuity risk?  No				
Project Date/s: Fri 21 <sup>st</sup> Sept – Sun 30 <sup>th</sup> Sept						
<b>Event Details: (Brief description of your project and who is involved)</b> The trail is free and open to any member of the public access to a GPS/3G enabled Smartphone. After downloading the mobile application ('app'), participants will walk its 3.5 mile length from the Canal Basin in the city centre to Tinsley Locks, along a trail overlaid with audio and visuals – accessed via headphones and mobile phone.  Access to the app and assistance is provided through the Port of Sheffield website, and during the University of Sheffield Festival of the Mind (21 <sup>st</sup> – 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2012) at a physical 'launch point' within the Sheffield Canal Basin (Victoria Quays). Here participants will be issued with a map (also available via the website) and headphones.  All participants will be required to read and agree to the project guidelines (either physically or electronically) before the trail can be started.  At this point participants will also be advised that the project takes place on a public towpath and reminded that the project team / University cannot take responsibility for personal safety or safety of personal possessions. All participants will be required to read this disclaimer before accessing the digital assets on the website and/or mobile application.						
<b>What is the Hazard</b>  Loneworking at the canal basin.	<b>What is the Potential Harm</b>  Personal safety and safety of equipment.	<b>Who is at Risk</b>  PROJECT STAFF: Adam Park (Uni of Sheffield) or others (Blue Shed) involved in the project.	<b>Existing Control/ Proposed Control Measures</b>  Two members of staff to run the launch point each day.  Agree support from project partner (CV Marina) to access and support from their office for any H&S emergencies.  Project hours limited to normal office hours (while neighbouring shops and	<b>Likelihood</b>  1	<b>Severity</b>  2	<b>Risk Rating</b>  2

			businesses are open).						
Tripping / falling on the towpath	Injury		PARTICIPANTS		Cover the following in pre-event guidelines: All children or young people under 16 must be accompanied by an adult and under close supervision. All participants must: - wear appropriate footwear. - remain observant for trip hazards during the walk - stay on the canal towpath / and only use designated (signposted) exit points. - take care when crossing the canal lock gates and passing anglers.	1	2	2	
Proximity to water	Injury / illness / death.				Cover the following in pre-event guidelines: Participants must be aware of the dangers of the canal and not enter to water.  Guidelines to make participants and aware of Weil's Disease. (Low likelihood of this, however after visiting the canal they should wash hands before eating / preparing food / smoking.)  All children or young people under 16 must be accompanied by an adult and under close supervision.  All participants must stick to the towpath / designated route, and stay away from the water's edge.	1	3	3	
Proximity to other towpath users	Annoyance of other users		PARTICIPANTS & general public		Guidelines to make participants aware that they may meet members of the public on the towpath / route, who may be walking, cycling or fishing.  Participants should take care and give way where appropriate. The event is a walking trail should not be attempted by bike.	2	1	2	

**Risk Assessment:** - Lesley Allen, The University of Sheffield; The National Fairground Archive  
Colin Rose (University Insurance Services) confirmed adequate insurance cover fit for purpose for FOTM



Personal safety	Personal safety and safety of personal possessions.	PARTICIPANTS	All children or young people under 16 must be accompanied by an adult  Guidelines to advise participants to be sensible while using headphones / mobile phones (as they would be in the course of normal use).  Project launch point limited inside normal office (daylight) hours, and to suggest to all participants that the trail should not be undertaken alone after dark.	2	2	4
Fatigue / dehydration	Fatigue / dehydration	PARTICIPANTS	Pre-event info and briefing to make all aware that they should bring water / soft drinks and snacks with them.  Map indicates alternative points of exit from the towpath and public transport links back into the City Centre.	2	1	2
Weather	Getting cold / wet / sunburnt	PARTICIPANTS	Pre-event information and briefing to ensure participants wear appropriate clothing / waterproofs / sun hat / sun block.	2	1	2

Signed: 

Adam Park  
(Project Lead Name)

cc. Lesley Allen, Festival of The Mind Project Manager, The University of Sheffield, The National Fairground Archive, Western Bank Library, Western Bank, Sheffield S10 2TN

[\\Ashopton\library\National Fairground Archive\NFA Events Admin\Weston May Fair\Risk Assessment final for Weston May Fair 12.doc](#)

**Risk Assessment:** - Lesley Allen, The University of Sheffield; The National Fairground Archive  
Colin Rose (University Insurance Services) confirmed adequate insurance cover fit for purpose for FOTM



Mr. Adam Park  
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29 August 2012 Wednesday, 12 March 2014

**Telephone:** +44 (0) 114 2220345  
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Dear Adam

**PROJECT TITLE: Context- aware: The production of the 'locative intervention' as *critical spatial practice and collaborative methodology* in articulating or 'mapping' place-identity.**

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 29.08.12 the above-named project was **approved** on ethics grounds, on the basis that you will adhere to the following document that you submitted for ethics review:

- University research ethics application form (20.07.12)
- Participant Information Document
- Risk Assessment

If during the course of the project you need to deviate significantly from the above-approved document please inform me since written approval will be required. Please also inform me should you decide to terminate the project prematurely.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Walker  
Ethics Administrator